





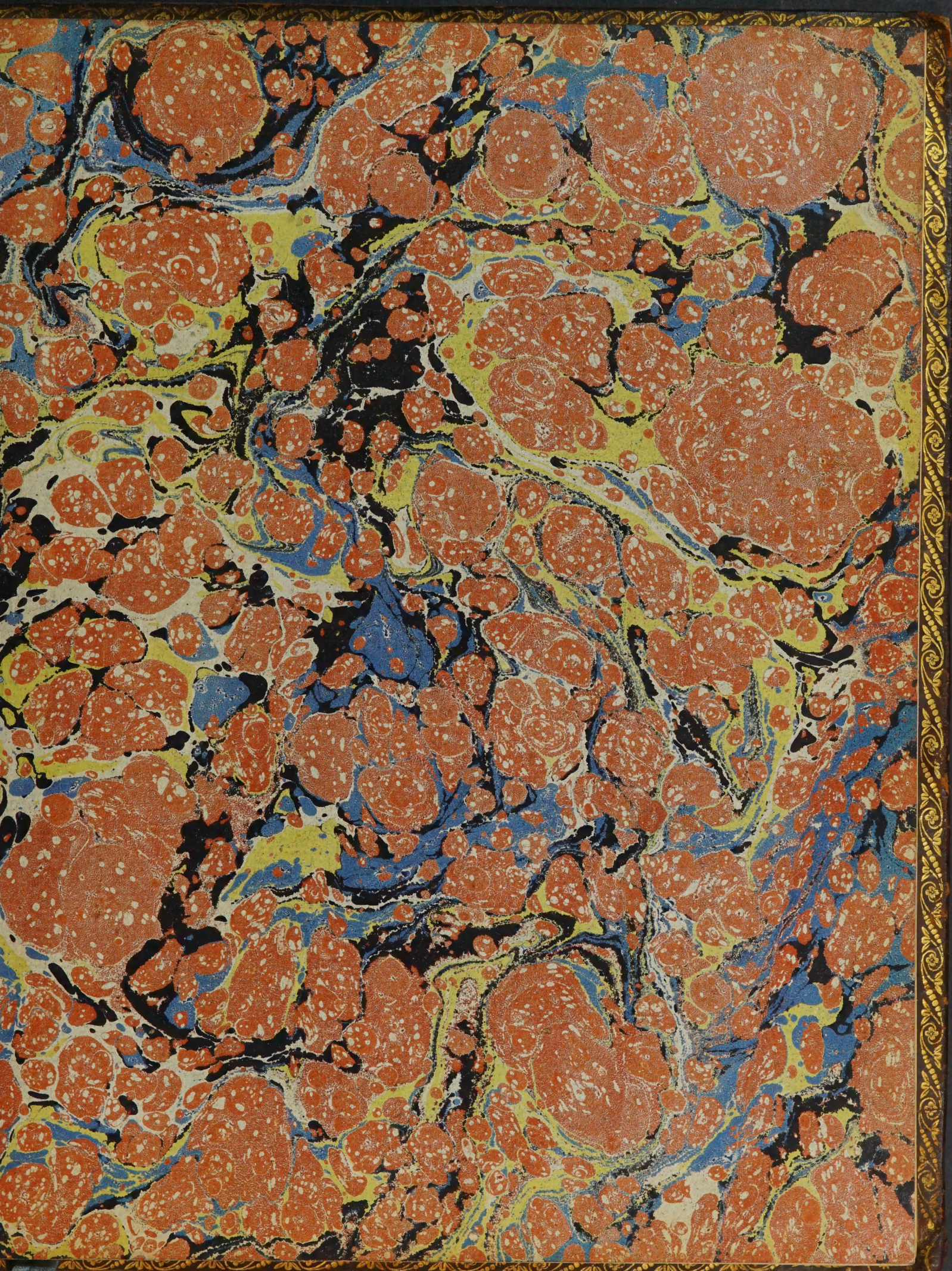
Hobbinol
Field Sports
and the
Bowl Green







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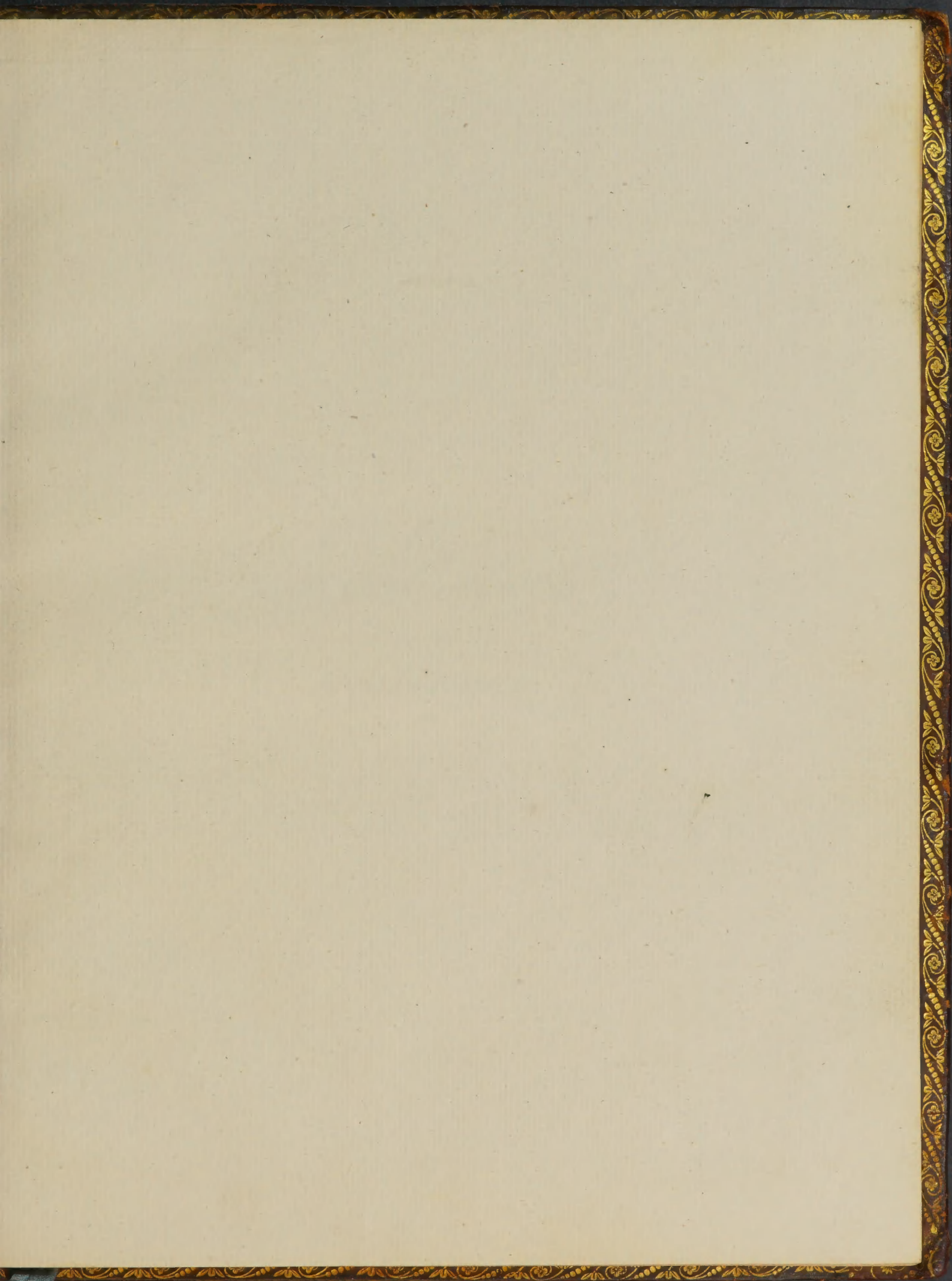
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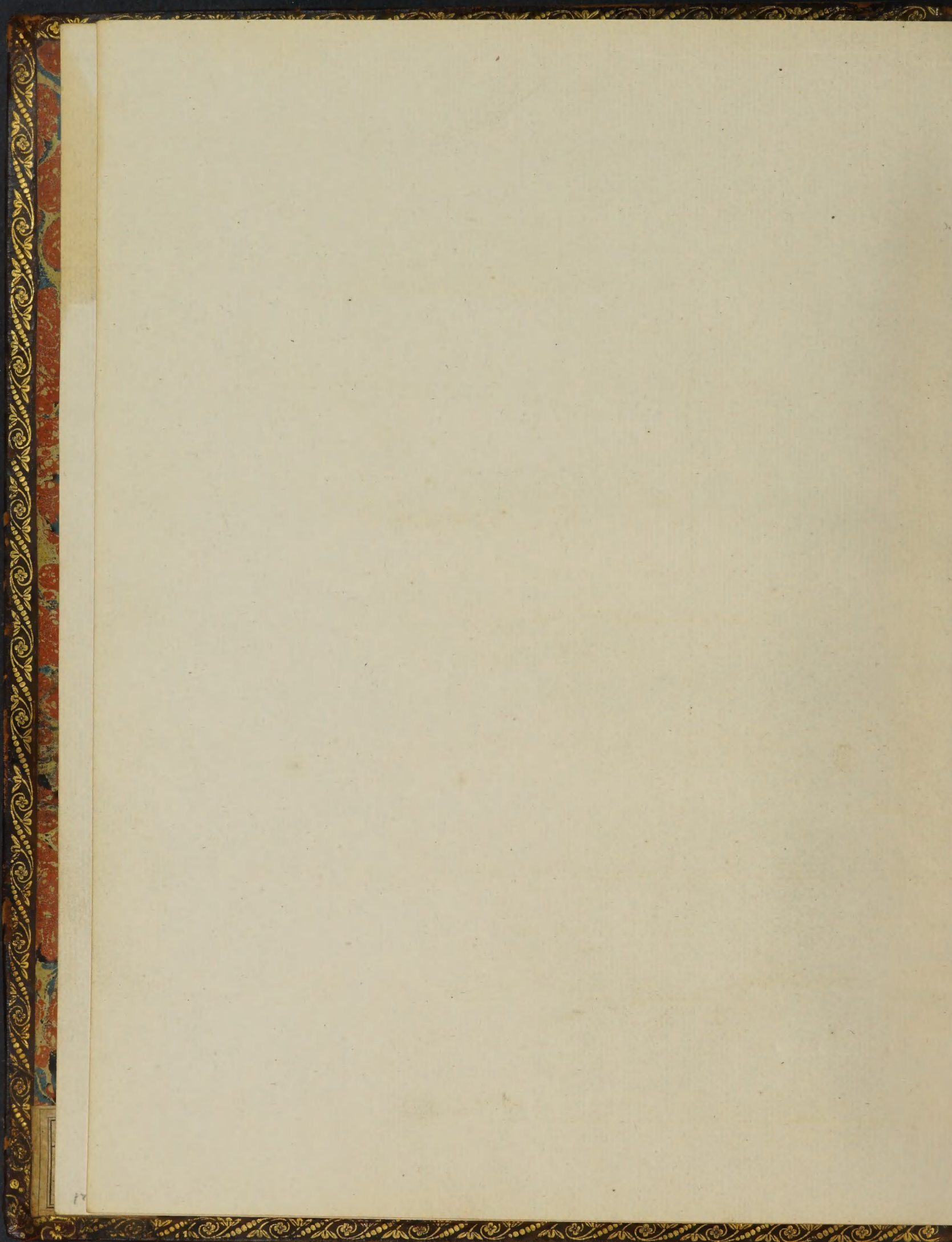
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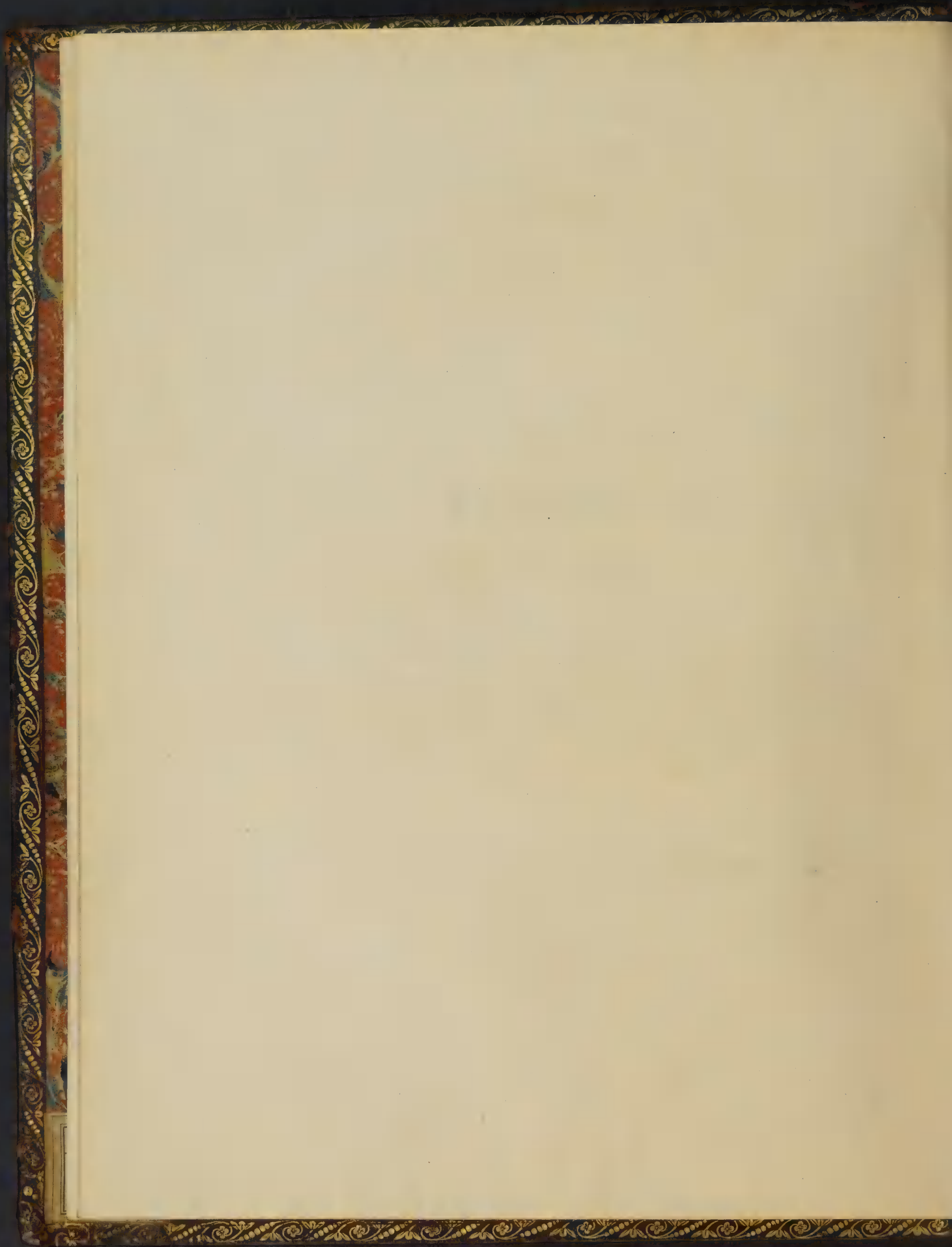
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HOBBINOL,
FIELD SPORTS,
AND THE
BOWLING GREEN.



Somerville, William.

HOBBINOL,
FIELD SPORTS,
AND THE
BOWLING GREEN.

BY
W. SOMERVILE.



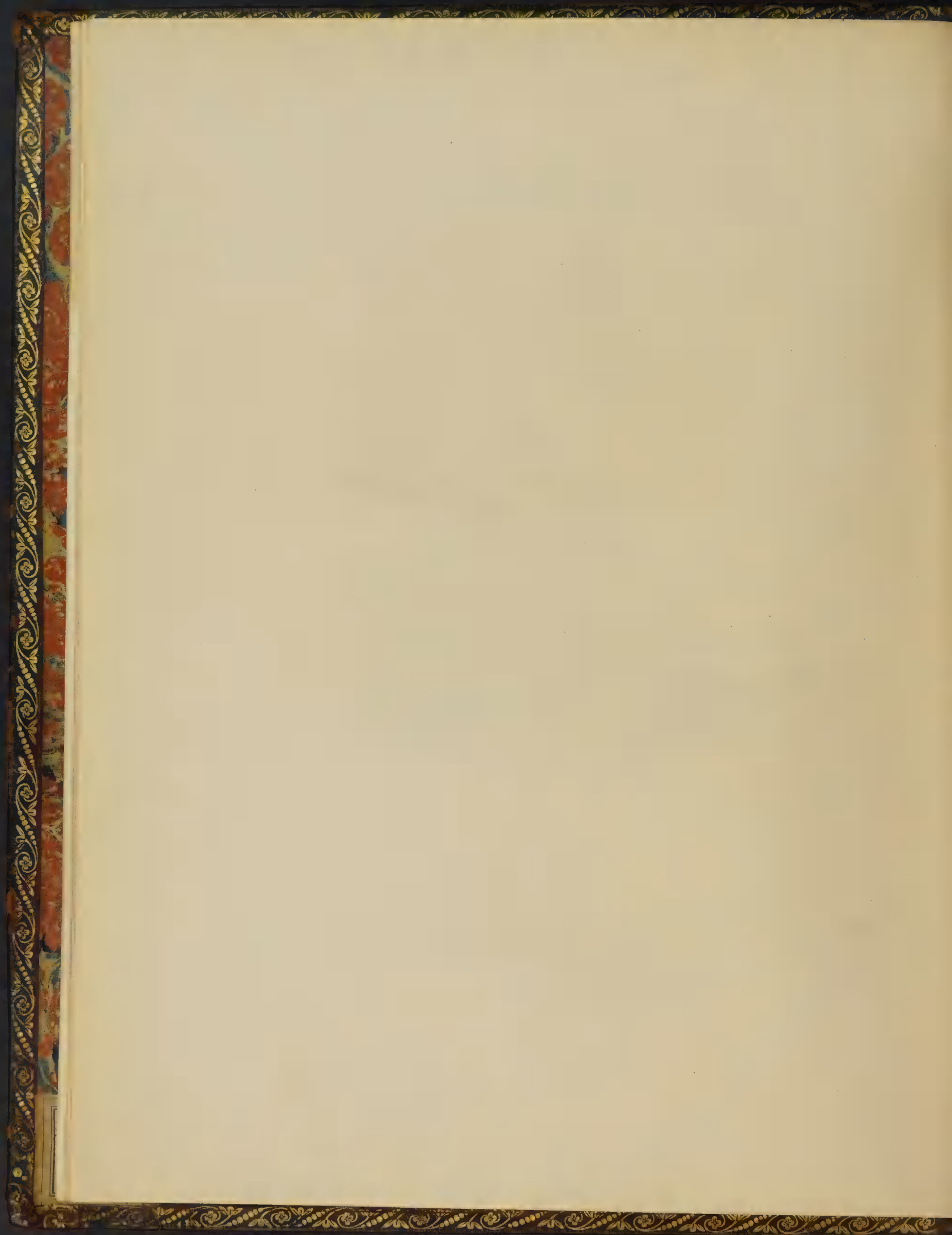
LONDON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BULMER AND CO.

Shakspeare Printing-Office,

FOR R. ACKERMANN, IN THE STRAND.

1813.





THE Edition of Mr. SOMERVILE'S Poem of the CHASE, printed by Mr. BULMER at the *Shakspeare Press* in the year 1796, is universally acknowledged to be among the finest Specimens of British Typography; and the Subscribers to it are now presented with a second and similar volume, including the lesser Poems of the same popular writer on Field and Rural Sports, so as to produce, when united,

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a complete Poetical Work on subjects which form so large a portion of the manly amusements of the English Gentleman. Having been printed at the same Press and under the same care, it will be found to possess an equal degree of Typographical Beauty with the former Publication.

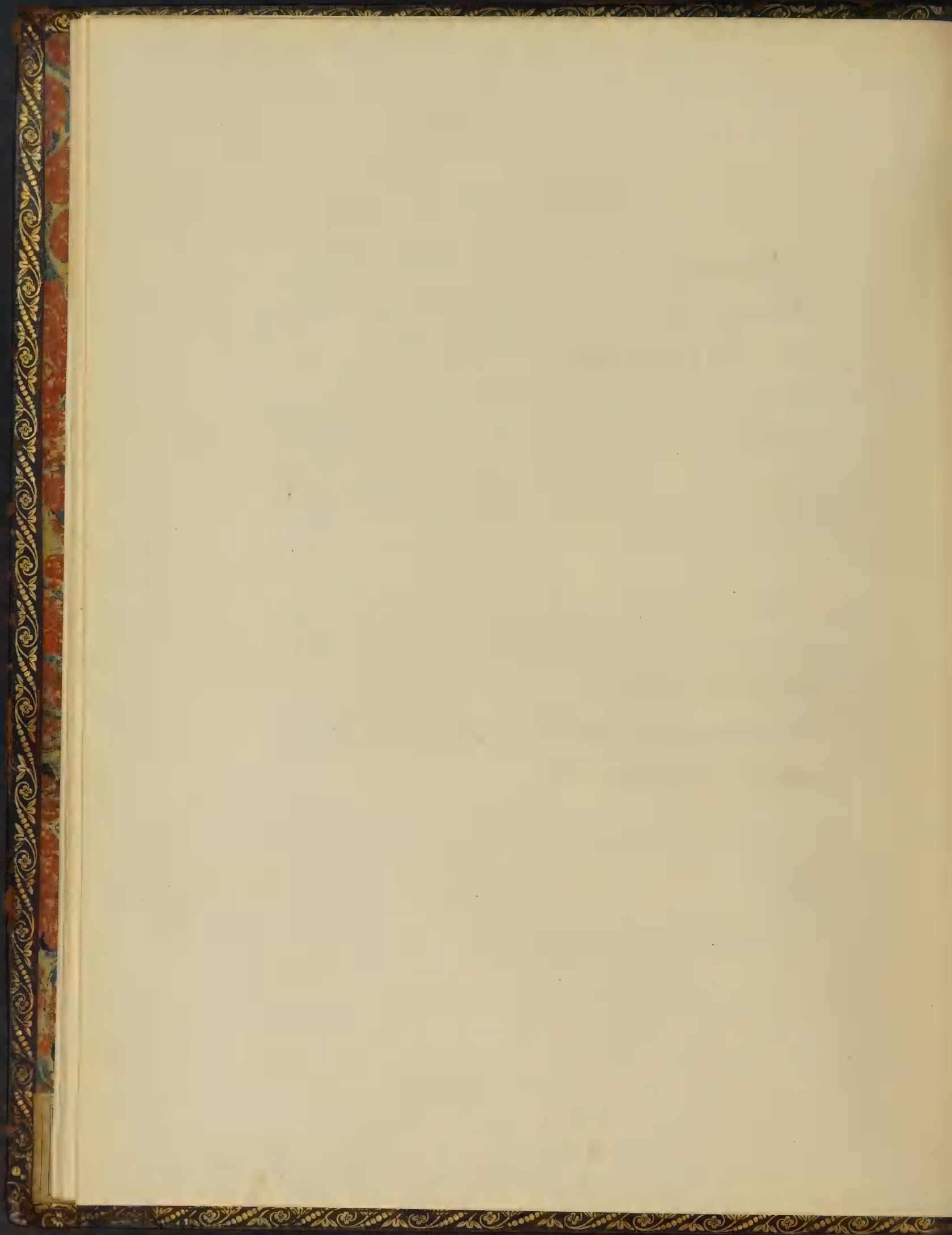
Mr. BULMER's volume was decorated by that eminent Artist Mr. *Bewick*, who, in his manner of engraving the blocks, studiously endeavoured to introduce that determined breadth of light and shade which wood so eminently possesses over copper-plate engraving. That ingenious man completely effected what he undertook to produce; and his merit is fully acknowledged: but, at the same time, it is presumed, that he could never have equalled,

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by his mode of engraving, what *Nesbit* and *Thurston* have done in this Volume, nor what *Branston*, *Nesbit*, *Clennell*, &c. have effected in THE RELIGIOUS EMBLEMS; a work of superior interest in itself, and whose numerous, characteristic decorations have been generally allowed to display the best specimens of wood engraving, of modern times and in any country. —In that Work, as well as in the Volume I now present to the Publick, my zeal in the service of the Arts will, I trust, be favoured with the approbation which I have endeavoured to deserve.

RUDOLPH ACKERMANN.

Strand,
May 1813.



HOBBINOL,
OR
THE RURAL GAMES.

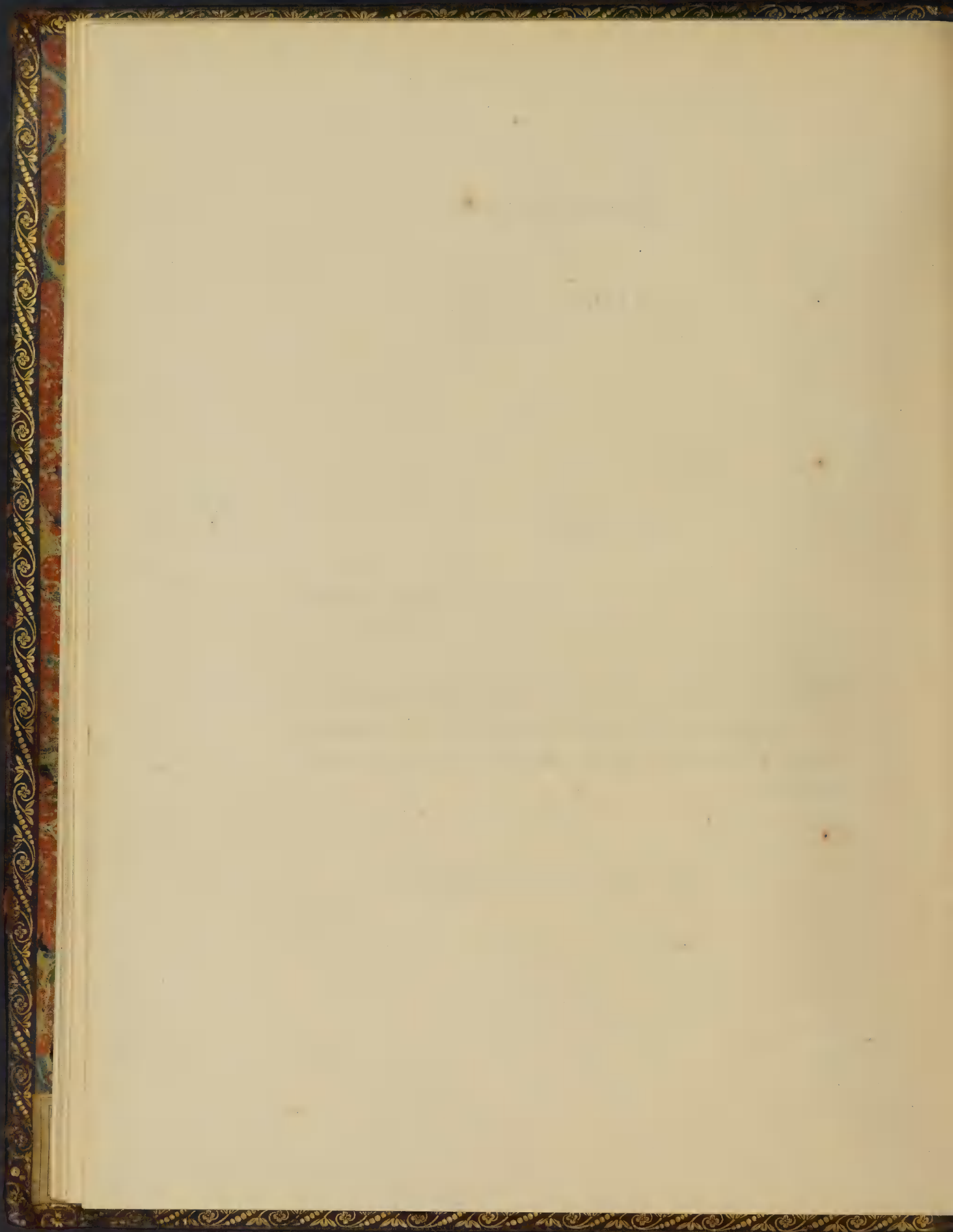
A BURLESQUE POEM.

TO
MR. HOGARTH.

*P*ERMIT me, Sir, to make choice of you for my Patron, being the greatest master in the burlesque way. In this indeed you have some advantage of your poetical brethren, that you paint to the eye; yet, remember, Sir, that we give speech and motion, and a greater variety to our figures. Your province is the Town; leave me a small out-ride in the Country, and I shall be content. In this, at least, let us both agree, to make Vice and Folly the objects of our ridicule; and we cannot fail to be of some service to mankind.

*I am, Sir,
your admirer, and most humble servant,*

W. S.



P R E F A C E.

NOTHING is more common than for us poor bards, when we have acquired a little reputation, to print ourselves into disgrace. We climb the Aonian mount with difficulty and toil, we receive the bays for which we languished; till, grasping still at more, we lose our hold, and fall at once to the bottom.

The Author of this piece would not thus be *felo de se*, nor would he be murdered by persons unknown. But as he is satisfied, that there are many imperfect copies of this trifle dispersed abroad, and, as he is credibly informed, that he shall soon be exposed to view in such an attitude, as he would not care to appear in; he thinks it most prudent in this desperate case to throw himself on the mercy of the publick; and offer this whimsical work a voluntary sacrifice, in hope that he stands a better chance for their indulgence, now it has received his last hand, than when curtailed and mangled by others.

The poets of almost all nations have celebrated the games of their several countries. Homer began, and all the mimick tribe followed the example of that great father of poetry. Even our own Milton, who laid his scene beyond the limits of this sublunary world, has found room for descriptions of this sort, and has performed it in a more sublime manner than any who went before him. His, indeed, are sports; but they are the sports of angels. This gentleman has endeavoured to do justice to his countrymen, the British freeholders, who, when dressed in their holiday clothes, are by no means persons of a despicable figure; but eat and drink

as plentifully, and fight as heartily, as the greatest hero in the Iliad. There is also some use in descriptions of this nature, since nothing gives us a clearer idea of the genius of a nation, than their sports and diversions. If we see people dancing even in wooden shoes, and a fiddle always at their heels, we are soon convinced of the levity and volatile spirit of those merry slaves. The famous bull-feasts are an evident token of the quixotism and romantick taste of the Spaniards : and a country-wake is too sad an image of the infirmities of our own people. We see nothing but broken heads, bottles flying about, tables overturned, outrageous drunkenness, and eternal squabble.

Thus much of the subject : it may not be improper to touch a little upon the style. One of the greatest poets and most candid criticks of this age, has informed us that there are two sorts of burlesque. Be pleased to take it in his own words. Spectator, No. 242. “ Burlesque (says he) is of two kinds. The first represents mean persons in the accoutrements of heroes ; the other, great persons acting and speaking like the basest among the people. Don Quixote is an instance of the first, and Lucian’s gods of the second. It is a dispute among the criticks, whether burlesque runs best in heroick, like the Dispensary ; or in doggerel, like that of Hudibras. I think, where the low character is to be raised, the heroick is the most proper measure ; but when an hero is to be pulled down and degraded, it is best done in doggerel.” Thus far Mr. Addison. If therefore the heroick is the proper measure, where the low character is to be raised, Milton’s style must be very proper in the subject here treated of ; because it raises the low character more than is possible to be done under the restraint of rhyme ; and the ridicule chiefly consists in raising that low character. I beg leave to add the authority of Mr. Smith, in his poem upon the death of Mr. John Philips. The whole passage is so very fine, and gives so clear an idea of his

manner of writing, that the reader will not think his labour lost in running it over :

Oh various bard ! you all our pow'rs control,
 You now disturb, and now divert the soul.
 Milton and Butler in thy Muse combine ;
 Above the last thy manly beauties shine.
 For as I've seen two rival wits contend,
 One gaily charge, one gravely wise defend ;
 That on quick turns, and points in vain relies ;
 This with a look demure, and steady eyes,
 With dry rebukes and sneering praise replies :
 So thy grave lines extort a juster smile,
 Reach Butler's fancy, but surpass his style.
 He speaks Scarron's low phrase in humble strains ;
 In thee the solemn air of great Cervantes reigns.
 What sounding lines his abject themes express !
 What shining words the pompous shilling dress !
 There, there my cell, immortal made, outvies
 The frailer piles, that o'er its ruins rise.
 In her best light the comick Muse appears,
 When she with borrow'd pride the buskin wears.
 So when nurse Nokes to act young Ammon tries,
 With shambling legs, long chin, and foolish eyes,
 With dangling hands he strokes the imperial robe,
 And with a cuckold's air commands the globe,
 The pomp, and sound, the whole buffoon display'd,
 And Ammon's son more mirth than Gomez made.

But here it may be objected, that this manner of writing contradicts the rule in Horace :

Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult.

Monsieur Boileau, in his dissertation upon the Joconde of de la Fontaine, quotes this passage in Horace, and observes, *que comme il n'y a rien de plus froid, que de conter une chose grande en stile bas, aussi n'y a-t-il de plus ridicule, que de raconter une histoire comique et absurde en termes graves et serieux*. But then

he justly adds this exception to the general rule in Horace : *à moins que ce sérieux ne soit affecté tout exprès pour rendre la chose encore plus burlesque.* If the observation of that celebrated critick, Monsieur Dacier, is true ; Horace himself, in the same Epistle to the Pisos, and not far distant from the rule here mentioned, has aimed to improve the burlesque by the help of the sublime, in his note upon this verse :

Debemur morti nos nostraque ; sive receptus
Terra Neptunus —

And upon the five following verses has this general remark : *Toutes ces expressions nobles qu' Horace entasse dans ces six vers servent à rendre plus plaisante cette chute :*

Ne dum verborum stet honos —

car rien ne contribue tant au ridicule que le grand. He indeed would be severe upon himself alone, who should censure this way of writing, when he must plainly see, that it is affected on purpose, only to raise the ridicule, and give the reader a more agreeable entertainment. Nothing can improve a merry tale so much, as its being delivered with a grave and serious air : our imaginations are agreeably surprised, and fond of a pleasure so little expected. Whereas he, who would bespeak our laughter by an affected grimace and ridiculous gestures, must play his part very well indeed, or he will fall short of the idea he has raised. It is true, Virgil was very sensible that it was difficult thus to elevate a low and mean subject :

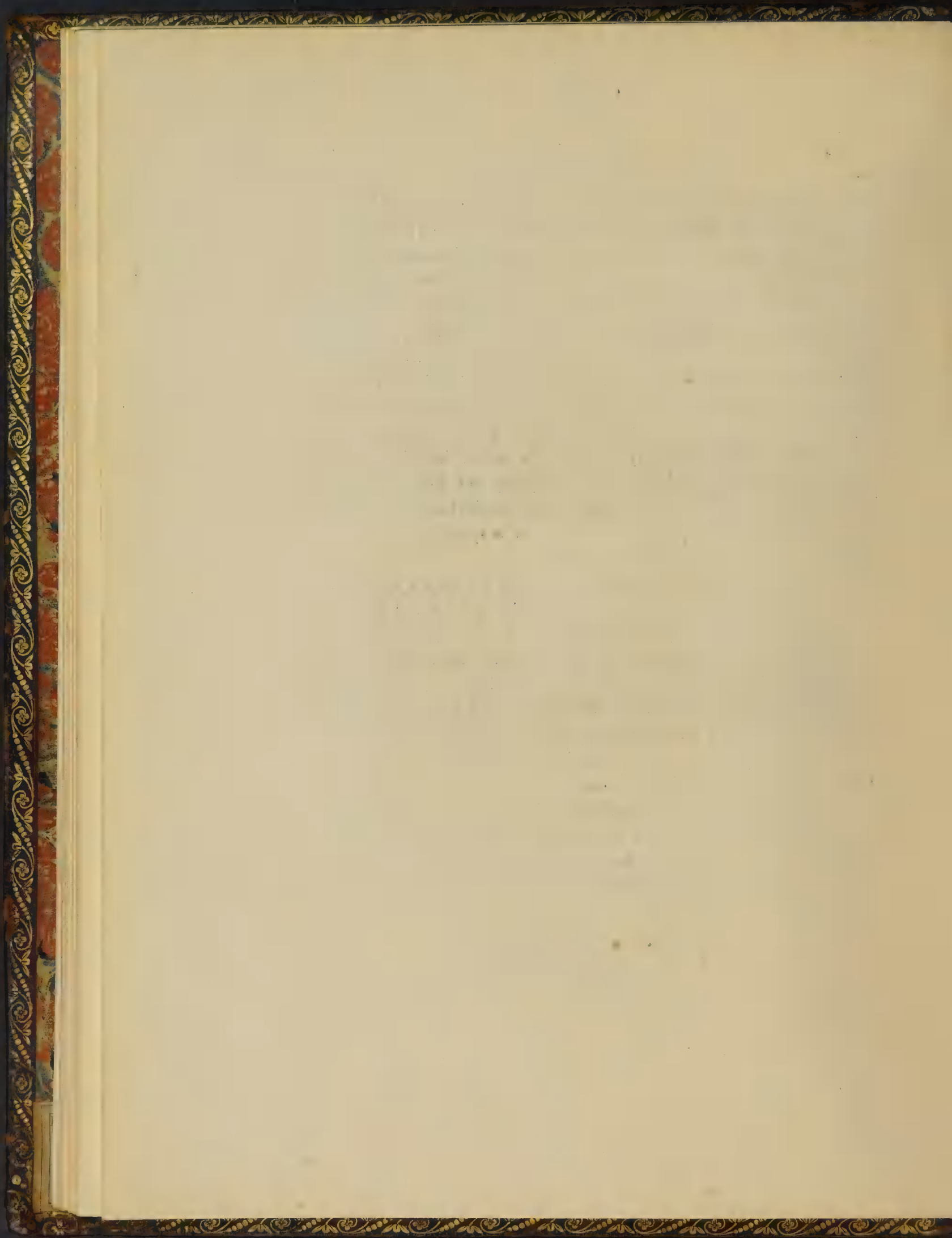
Nec sum animi dubius, verbis ea vincere magnum
Quam sit, et angustis hunc addere rebus honorem ;

but tells us, for our encouragement, in another place,

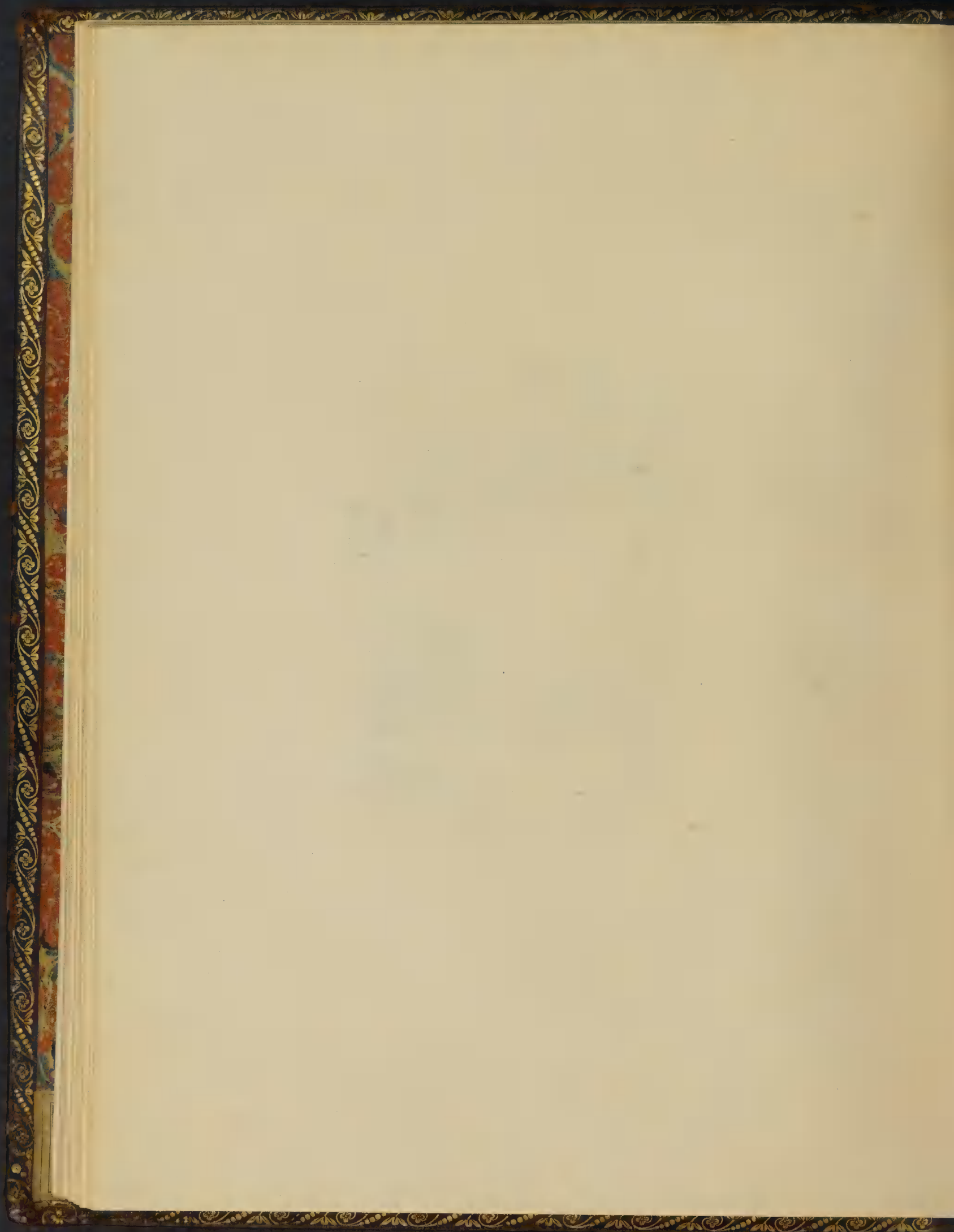
In tenui labor, at tenuis non gloria, si quem
Numina læva sinunt, auditque vocatus Apollo.

Mr. Addison is of the same opinion, and adds, that the difficulty is very much increased by writing in blank verse. "The English and French (says he), who always use the same words in verse, as in ordinary conversation, are forced to raise their language with metaphors and figures, or by the pompousness of the whole phrase to wear off any littleness, that appears in the particular parts that compose it. This makes our blank verse, where there is no rhyme to support the expression, extremely difficult to such as are not masters of the tongue; especially when they write upon low subjects." *Remarks upon Italy*, p. 99. But there is even yet a greater difficulty behind: the writer in this kind of burlesque must not only keep up the pomp and dignity of the style, but an artful sneer should appear through the whole work; and every man will judge, that it is no easy matter to blend together the Hero and the Harlequin.

If any person should want a key to this poem, his curiosity shall be gratified: I shall, in plain words, tell him, "It is a satire against the luxury, the pride, the wantonness, and quarrelsome temper of the middling sort of people." As these are the proper and genuine cause of that bare-faced knavery, and almost universal poverty, which reign without control in every place; and as to these we owe our many bankrupt farmers, our trade decayed, and lands uncultivated; the author has reason to hope that no honest man, who loves his country, will think this short reproof out of season. For, perhaps, this merry way of bantering men into virtue, may have a better effect, than the most serious admonitions; since many, who are proud to be thought immoral, are not very fond of being ridiculous.

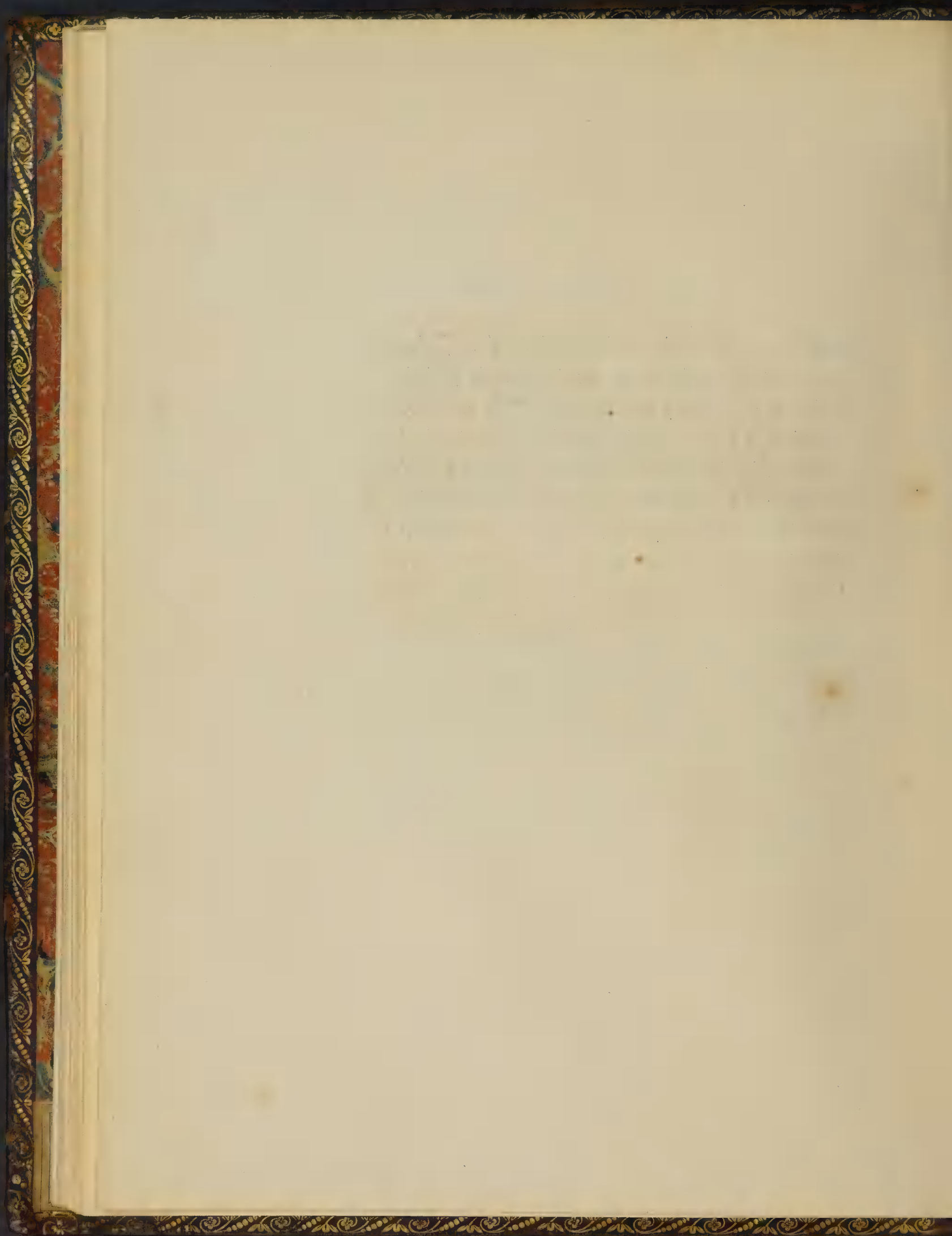






THE ARGUMENT.

Proposition. Invocation addressed to Mr. John Philips, author of the Cider Poem, and Splendid Shilling. Description of the Vale of Evesham. The seat of Hobbinol; Hobbinol a great man in his village, seated in his wicker smoking his pipe, has one only son. Young Hobbinol's education, bred up with Ganderetta his near relation. Young Hobbinol and Ganderetta chosen king and queen of May. Her dress and attendants. The May-games. Twangdillo the fidler, his character. The dancing. Ganderetta's extraordinary performance. Bagpipes good musick in the Highlands. Milonides, master of the ring, disciplines the mob; proclaims the several prizes. His speech. Pastorel takes up the belt. His character, his heroick figure, his confidence. Hobbinol, by permission of Ganderetta, accepts the challenge, vaults into the ring. His honourable behaviour; escapes a scowering. Ganderetta's agony. Pastorel foiled. Ganderetta not a little pleased.





What old Menalcas at his feast reveal'd,
I sing; strange feats of ancient prowess, deeds
Of high renown, while all his listening guests
With eager joy received the pleasing tale.

O thou!¹ who late on Vaga's flowery banks
Slumbering secure, with Stirom² well bedew'd,

¹ Mr. John Philips, author of *Cider*. ² Strong Herefordshire cider.

Fallacious cask, in sacred dreams wert taught
By ancient seers, and Merlin, prophet old,
To raise ignoble themes with strains sublime,
Be thou my guide! while I thy track pursue
With wing unequal, through the wide expanse
Adventurous range, and emulate thy flights.

In that rich vale,³ where with Dobunian⁴ fields
Cornavian⁵ borders meet, far-famed of old
For Montfort's⁶ hapless fate, undaunted earl;
Where from her fruitful urn Avona pours
Her kindly torrent on the thirsty glebe,
And pillages the hills to enrich the plains;
On whose luxuriant banks flowers of all hues
Start up spontaneous; and the teeming soil
With hasty shoots prevents its owner's pray'r;
The pamper'd, wanton steer, of the sharp axe
Regardless, that o'er his devoted head
Hangs menacing, crops his delicious bane,

³ Vale of Evesham. ⁴ Gloucestershire. ⁵ Worcestershire.

⁶ Simon de Montfort, killed at the battle of Evesham.

Nor knows the price is life; with envious eye
His labouring yoke-fellow beholds his plight,
And deems him blest, while on his languid neck,
In solemn sloth, he tugs the lingering plough.
So blind are mortals, of each other's state
Misjudging, self-deceived. Here, as supreme,
Stern Hobbinol in rural plenty reigns
O'er wide-extended fields, his large domain.
The obsequious villagers, with looks submiss,
Observant of his eye, or when with seed
To impregnate Earth's fat womb, or when to bring,
With clamorous joy, the bearded harvest home.

Here, when the distant sun lengthens the nights,
When the keen frosts the shivering farmer warn
To broach his mellow cask, and frequent blasts
Instruct the crackling billets how to blaze,
In his warm wicker-chair, whose pliant twigs,
In close embraces join'd, with spacious arch
Vault the thick-woven roof, the bloated churl
Loiters in state, each arm reclined is propp'd

With yielding pillows of the softest down.
In mind composed, from short coëval tube
He sucks the vapours bland, thick curling clouds
Of smoke around his reeking temples play;
Joyous he sits, and, impotent of thought,
Puffs away care and sorrow from his heart.
How vain the pomp of kings! Look down, ye great,
And view with envious eye the downy nest,
Where soft repose, and calm contentment dwell,
Unbribed by wealth and unrestrain'd by power.

One son alone had blest his bridal bed,
Whom good Calista bore, nor long survived
To share a mother's joy, but left the babe
To his paternal care. An orphan niece,
Near the same time, his dying brother sent
To claim his kind support. The helpless pair
In the same cradle slept, nursed up with care
By the same tender hand, on the same breasts
Alternate hung with joy; till reason dawn'd,
And a new light broke out by slow degrees:

Then on the floor the pretty wantons play'd,
Gladding the farmer's heart with growing hopes
And pleasures erst unfelt. Whene'er with cares
Oppress'd, when wearied, or alone he dozed,
Their harmless prattle soothed his troubled soul.
Say, Hobbinol, what ecstasies of joy
Trill'd through thy veins, when, climbing for a kiss,
With little palms they stroked thy grisly beard,
Or round thy wicker whirl'd their rattling cars?
Thus from their earliest days bred up and train'd
To mutual fondness, with their stature grew
The thriving passion. What love can decay
That roots so deep! Now ripening manhood curl'd
On the gay stripling's chin; her panting breasts,
And trembling blushes glowing on her cheeks,
Her secret wish betray'd. She at each mart
All eyes attracted; but her faithful shade,
Young Hobbinol, ne'er wander'd from her side.
A frown from him dash'd every rival's hopes;
For he, like Peleus' son, was prone to rage,

Inexorable, swift like him of foot
With ease could overtake his dastard foe,
Nor spared the suppliant wretch. And now approach'd
Those merry days, when all the nymphs and swains,
In solemn festivals and rural sports,
Pay their glad homage to the blooming spring.
Young Hobbinol, by joint consent, is raised
To imperial dignity, and, in his hand
Bright Ganderetta tripp'd, the jovial queen
Of Maia's gaudy month, profuse of flowers.
From each enamell'd mead the attendant nymphs,
Loaded with odorous spoils, from these select
Each flower of gorgeous die, and garlands weave
Of party-colour'd sweets; each busy hand
Adorns the jocund queen: in her loose hair,
That to the winds in wanton ringlets plays,
The tufted cowslips breathe their faint perfumes.
On her refulgent brow, as crystal clear,
As Parian marble smooth, Narcissus hangs
His drooping head, and views his image there,

Unhappy flower! Pansies of various hue,
Iris, and hyacinth, and asphodel,
To deck the nymph, their richest liveries wear
And lavish all their pride. Not Flora's self
More lovely smiles, when, to the dawning year,
Her opening bosom heavenly fragrance breathes.

See, on yon verdant lawn, the gathering crowd
Thickens amain; the buxom nymphs advance,
Usher'd by jolly clowns: distinctions cease,
Lost in the common joy, and the bold slave
Leans on his wealthy master, unproved:
The sick no pains can feel, no wants the poor:
Round his fond mother's neck the smiling babe
Exulting clings; hard by, decrepit age,
Propp'd on his staff, with anxious thought revolves
His pleasures past, and casts his grave remarks
Among the heedless throng. The vigorous youth
Strips for the combat, hopeful to subdue
The fair-one's long disdain, by valour now
Glad to convince her coy, erroneous heart,

And prove his merit equal to her charms.
Soft pity pleads his cause; blushing she views
His brawny limbs, and his undaunted eye
That looks a proud defiance on his foes.
Resolved and obstinately firm, he stands;
Danger nor death he fears, while the rich prize
Is victory and love. On the large bough
Of a thick-spreading elm Twangdillo sits:
One leg on Ister's banks the hardy swain
Left, undismay'd; Bellona's lightning scorch'd
His manly visage, but in pity left
One eye secure. He many a painful bruise
Intrepid felt, and many a gaping wound,
For brown Kate's sake, and for his country's weal;
Yet still the merry bard, without regret
Bears his own ills, and, with his sounding shell
And comick phiz, relieves his drooping friends.
Hark, from aloft his tortured cat-gut squeals,
He tickles every string, to every note
He bends his pliant neck, his single eye

Twinkles with joy, his active stump beats time :
Let but this subtle artist softly touch
The trembling chords, the faint expiring swain
Trembles no less, and the fond yielding maid
Is tweedled into love. See with what pomp
The gaudy bands advance in trim array !
Love beats in every vein, from every eye
Darts his contagious flames. They frisk, they bound,
Now to brisk airs, and to the speaking strings
Attentive, in mid-way the sexes meet :
Joyous their adverse fronts they close, and press
To strict embrace, as resolute to force
And storm a passage to each other's heart ;
Till by the varying notes forewarn'd, back they
Recoil disparted : each with longing eyes
Pursues his mate retiring, till again
The blended sexes mix ; then, hand in hand
Fast lock'd, around they fly, or nimbly wheel
In mazes intricate. The jocund troop,
Pleased with their grateful toil, incessant shake

Their uncouth, brawny limbs, and knock their heels
Sonorous; down each brow the trickling balm
In torrents flows, exhaling sweets refresh
The gazing crowd, and heavenly fragrance fills
The circuit wide. So danced in days of yore,
When Orpheus play'd a lesson to the brutes,
The listening savages; the speckled pard
Dandled the kid, and with the bounding roe
The lion gambol'd. But what heavenly muse
With equal lays shall Ganderetta sing,
When, goddess-like, she skims the verdant plain,
Gracefully gliding? Every ravish'd eye
The nymph attracts, and every heart she wounds;
Thee most, transported Hobbinol! Lo, now,
Now to thy opening arms she skuds along,
With yielding blushes glowing on her cheeks;
And eyes that sweetly languish; but too soon,
Too soon, alas! she flies thy vain embrace,
But flies to be pursued; nimbly she trips,
And darts a glance so tender, as she turns,

That, with new hopes relieved, thy joys revive,
Thy stature's raised, and thou art more than man.
Thy stately port, and more majestick air,
And every sprightly motion speaks thy love.

To the loud bag-pipe's solemn voice attend,
Whose rising winds proclaim a storm is nigh.
Harmonious blasts! that warm the frozen blood
Of Caledonia's sons to love, or war,
And cheer their drooping hearts, robb'd of the sun's
Enlivening ray, that o'er the snowy Alps
Reluctant peeps, and speeds to better climes.

Forthwith in hoary majesty appears
One of gigantick size, but visage wan,
Milonides the strong, renown'd of old
For feats of arms, but, bending now with years,
His trunk unwieldy from the verdant turf
He rears deliberate, and with his plant
Of toughest virgin oak, in rising, aids
His trembling limbs; his bald and wrinkled front,
Entrench'd with many a glorious scar, bespeaks

Submissive reverence. He with countenance grim
Boasts his past deeds, and with redoubled strokes
Marshals the crowd and forms the circle wide.
Stern arbiter! like some huge rock he stands,
That breaks the incumbent waves; they thronging press
In troops confused, and rear their foaming heads
Each above each, but from superiour force
Shrinking repell'd, compose of stateliest view
A liquid theatre. With hands uplift,
And voice Stentorian, he proclaims aloud
Each rural prize:—" To him whose active foot
Foils his bold foe, and rivets him to earth,
This pair of gloves, by curious virgin hands
Embroider'd, seam'd with silk and fringed with gold.
To him, who best the stubborn hilts can wield,
And bloody marks of his displeasure leave
On his opponent's head, this beaver white,
With silver edging graced, and scarlet plume.
Ye taper maidens! whose impetuous speed
Outflies the roe, nor bends the tender grass,

See here this prize, this rich laced smock behold,
White as your bosoms, as your kisses soft :
Blest nymph ! whom bounteous Heaven's peculiar grace
Allots this pompous vest, and worthy deems
To win a virgin and to wear a bride."

The gifts refulgent dazzle all the crowd,
In speechless admiration fix'd, unmoved :
Ev'n he who now each glorious palm displays,
In sullen silence views his batter'd limbs,
And sighs his vigour spent. Not so appall'd
Young Pastorel, for active strength renown'd :
Him Ida bore, a mountain shepherdess ;
On the bleak wold the new-born infant lay,
Exposed to winter snows, and northern blasts
Severe. As heroes old, who from great Jove
Derive their proud descent, so might he boast
His line paternal : but be thou, my Muse !
No leaky blab, nor painful umbrage give
To wealthy 'squire, or doughty knight, or peer
Of high degree. Him every shouting ring

In triumph crown'd, him ev'ry champion fear'd,
From Kiftsgate⁷ to remotest Henbury.⁷
High in the midst the brawny wrestler stands,
A stately towering object; the tough belt
Measures his ample breast, and shades around
His shoulders broad; proudly secure he kens
The tempting prize, in his presumptuous thought
Already gain'd; with partial look the crowd
Approve his claim. But Hobbinol, enraged
To see the important gift so cheaply won,
And uncontested honours tamely lost,
With lowly reverence thus accosts his queen:—
 “ Fair goddess! be propitious to my vows;
Smile on thy slave, nor Hercules himself
Shall rob us of this palm: that boaster vain
Far other port shall learn.” She, with a look
That pierced his inmost soul, smiling applauds
His generous ardour, with aspiring hope
Distends his breast, and stirs the man within:

⁷ Two Hundreds, in Gloucestershire.

Yet much, alas! she fears, for much she loves.
So from her arms the Paphian queen dismiss'd
The warrior god, on glorious slaughter bent,
Provoked his rage, and with her eyes inflamed
Her haughty paramour. Swift as the winds
Dispel the fleeting mists, at once he strips
His royal robes; and with a frown that chill'd
The blood of the proud youth, active he bounds
High o'er the heads of multitudes reclined:
But as beseem'd one, whose plain honest heart,
Nor passion foul, nor malice dark as hell,
But honour pure and love divine had fired,
His hand presenting, on his sturdy foe
Disdainfully he smiles; then, quick as thought,
With his left hand the belt, and with his right
His shoulder seized, fast griping; his right foot
Essay'd the champion's strength, but firm he stood,
Fix'd as a mountain-ash, and in his turn
Repaid the bold affront: his horny fist

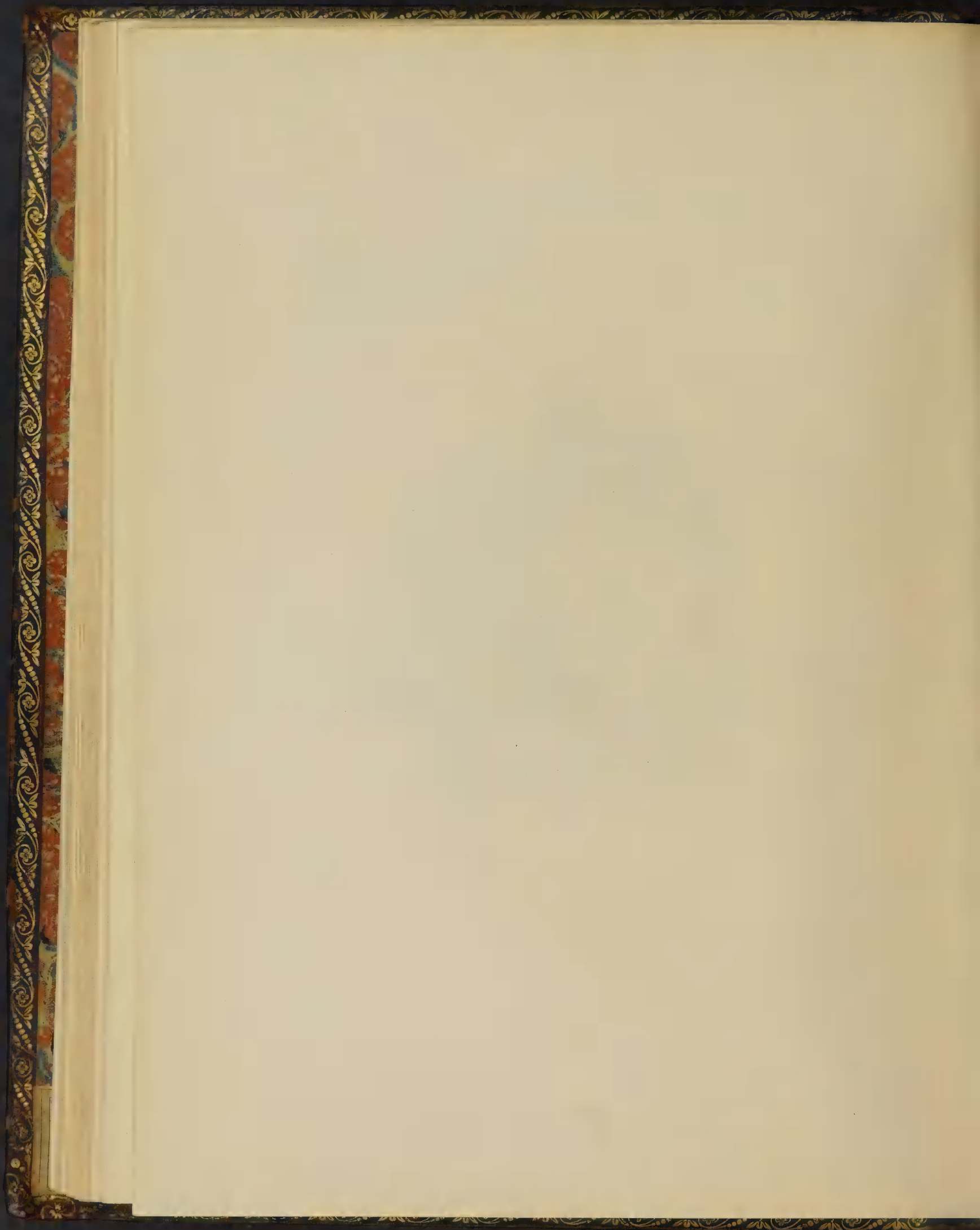
Fast on his back he closed, and shook in air
The cumb'rous load. Nor rest nor pause allow'd,
Their watchful eyes instruct their busy feet;
They pant, they heave; each nerve, each sinew's strain'd;
Grasping they close; beneath each painful gripe
The livid tumours rise; in briny streams
The sweat distils, and from their batter'd shins
The clotted gore distains the beaten ground.
Each swain his wish, each trembling nymph conceals
Her secret dread; while every panting breast
Alternate fears and hopes depress or raise.
Thus long in dubious scale the contest hung,
Till Pastorel, impatient of delay,
Collecting all his force, a furious stroke
At his left ancle aim'd; 'twas death to fall,
To stand impossible. O Ganderetta!
What horrors seize thy soul! on thy pale cheeks
The roses fade. But wav'ring long in air,
Nor firm on foot, nor as yet wholly fall'n,

On his right knee he slipp'd, and nimbly scaped
The foul disgrace. Thus on the slacken'd rope
The wingy-footed artist, frail support!
Stands tottering; now in dreadful shrieks the crowd
Lament his sudden fate, and yield him lost:
He on his hams, or on his brawny rump,
Sliding secure, derides their vain distress.
Up starts the vigorous Hobbinol undismay'd,
From mother earth like old Antæus raised,
With might redoubled. Clamour and applause
Shake all the neighbouring hills, Avona's banks
Return him loud acclaim; with ardent eyes,
Fierce as a tiger rushing from his lair,
He grasp'd the wrist of his insulting foe.
Then with quick wheel oblique, his shoulder-point
Beneath his breast he fix'd, and, whirl'd aloft,
High o'er his head the sprawling youth he flung:
The hollow ground rebellow'd as he fell.
The crowd press forward with tumultuous din;

Those to relieve their faint expiring friend,
With gratulations these: hands, tongues and caps
Outrageous joy proclaim, shrill fiddles squeak,
Hoarse bag-pipes roar, and Ganderetta smiles.

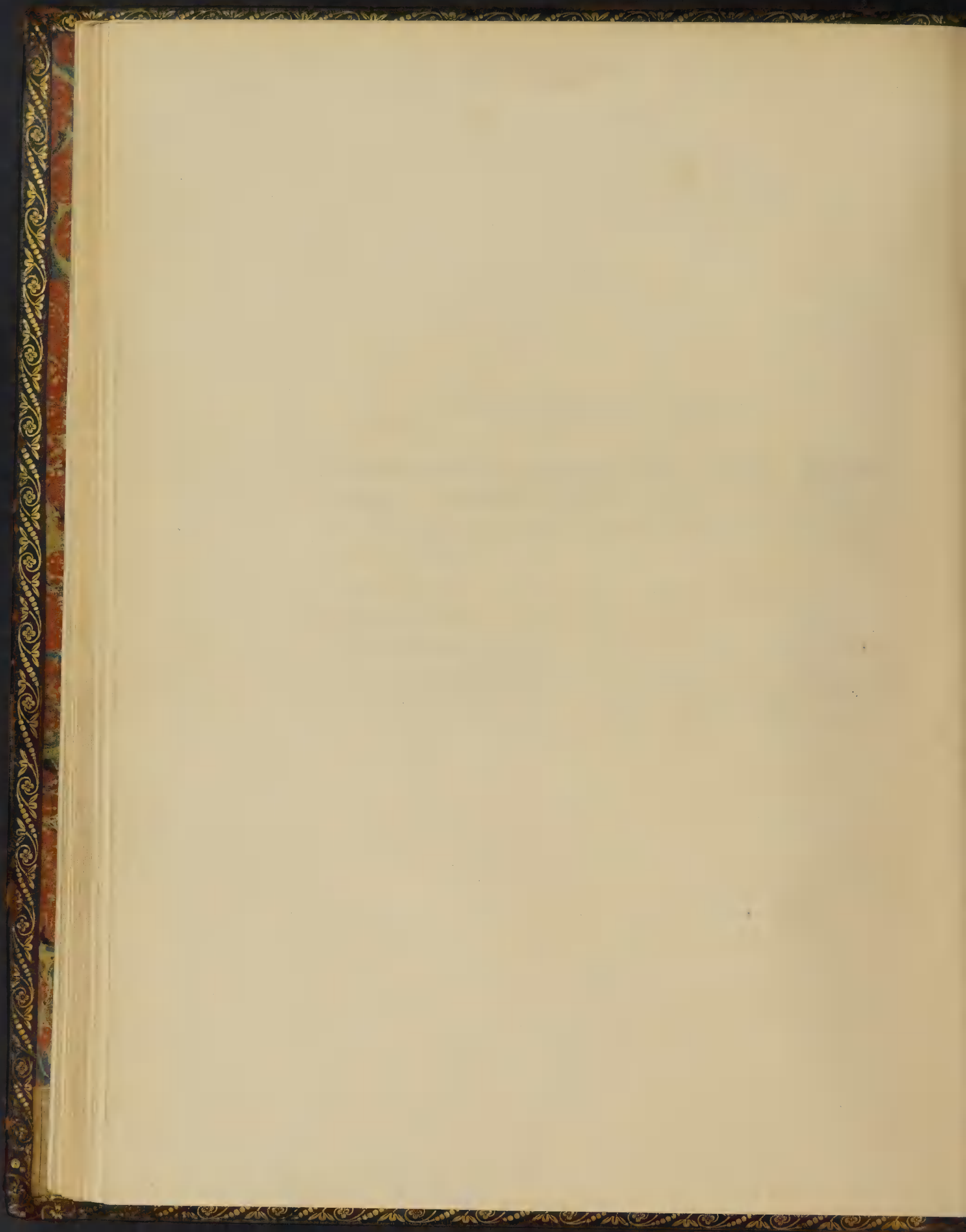






THE ARGUMENT.

The fray. Tonsorio, Colin, Hildebrand, Cuddy, Cindaraxa, Talgol, Avaro, Cubbin, Collakin, Mundungo. Sir Rhadamanth the justice, attended with his guards, comes to quell the fray. Rhadamanth's speech. Tumult appeased. Gorgonius the butcher takes up the hilts; his character. The Kiftsgatians' consternation, look wistfully on Hobbinol; his speech. The cudgel-playing. Gorgonius knocked down, falls upon Twangdillo; his distress, lamentation over his broken fiddle.





Long while an universal hubbub loud,
Deafening each ear, had drown'd each accent mild;
Till biting taunts, and harsh opprobrious words
Vile utterance found. How weak are human minds!
How impotent to stem the swelling tide,
And without insolence enjoy success!
The vale-inhabitants, proud and elate

With victory, know no restraint, but give
A loose to joy. Their champion Hobbinol
Vaunting they raise above that earth-born race
Of giants old, who, piling hills on hills,
Pelion on Ossa, with rebellious aim
Made war on Jove. The sturdy mountaineers,
Who saw their mightiest fallen, and in his fall
Their honours past impair'd, their trophies, won
By their proud fathers, who with scorn look'd down
Upon the subject vale, sullied, despoil'd
And levell'd with the dust, no longer bear
The keen reproach. But, as when sudden fire
Seizes the ripen'd grain, whose bending ears
Invite the reaper's hand, the furious god
In sooty triumph dreadful rides, upborne
On wings of wind, that with destructive breath
Feed the fierce flames; from ridge to ridge he bounds,
Wide-wasting, and pernicious ruin spreads:
So through the crowd, from breast to breast, swift flew
The propagated rage; loud-vollied oaths,

Like thunder bursting from a cloud, gave signs
Of wrath awaked. Prompt fury soon supplied
With arms uncouth; tough well-season'd plants,
Weighty with lead infused, on either host
Fall thick and heavy; stools in pieces rent,
And chairs and forms and batter'd bowls are hurl'd
With fell intent; like bombs the bottles fly
Hissing in air, their sharp-edged fragments drench'd
In the warm spouting gore; heaps driven on heaps
Promiscuous lie. Tonsorio now advanced
On the rough edge of battle: his broad front
Beneath his shining helm secure, as erst
Was thine, Mambrino, stout Iberian knight!
Defied the rattling storm, that on his head
Fell innocent. A table's ragged frame
In his right hand he bore, Herculean club!
Crowds, push'd on crowds, before his potent arm
Fled ignominious; havock and dismay
Hung on their rear. Colin, a merry swain,
Blithe as the soaring lark, as sweet the strains

Of his soft warbling lips that whistling cheer
His labouring team, who toss their heads well pleased,
In gaudy plumage deck'd, with stern disdain
Beheld this victor proud; his generous soul
Brook'd not the foul disgrace. High o'er his head
His ponderous plough-staff in both hands he raised;
Erect he stood, and stretching every nerve,
As from a forceful engine, down it fell
Upon his hollow'd helm, that yielding sunk
Beneath the blow, and with its sharpen'd edge
Shear'd both his ears; they on his shoulders broad
Hung ragged. Quick as thought the vigorous youth,
Shortening his staff, the other end he darts
Into his gaping jaws. Tonsorio fled
Sore maim'd; with pounded teeth and clotted gore
Half-choked, he fled; with him the host retired,
Companions of his shame; all but the stout,
And erst unconquer'd Hildebrand, brave man!
Bold champion of the hills! thy weighty blows
Our fathers felt dismay'd; to keep thy post

Unmoved, whilom thy valour's choice, now sad
Necessity compels; decrepit now
With age, and stiff with honourable wounds,
He stands unterrified; one crutch sustains
His frame majestick, the other in his hand
He wields tremendous; like a mountain boar
In toils enclosed, he dares his circling foes.
They shrink aloof, or soon with shame repent
The rash assault; the rustick heroes fall
In heaps around. Cuddy, a dextrous youth,
When force was vain, on fraudulent art relied:
Close to the ground low-cowering, unperceived,
Cautious he crept, and with his crooked bill
Cut sheer the frail support, prop of his age:
Reeling a while he stood, and menaced fierce
The insidious swain; reluctant now at length
Fell prone, and plough'd the dust. So the tall oak,
Old monarch of the groves, that long had stood
The shock of warring winds, and the red bolts
Of angry Jove, shorn of his leafy shade

At last, and inwardly decay'd, if chance
The cruel woodman spy the friendly spur,
His only hold; that sever'd, soon he nods,
And shakes the incumber'd mountain as he falls,

When manly valour fail'd, a female arm
Restored the fight. As in the adjacent booth
Black Cindaraxa's busy hand prepared
The smoky viands, she beheld, abash'd,
The routed host, and all her dastard friends
Far scatter'd o'er the plain: their shameful flight
Grieved her proud heart, for, hurried with the stream,
E'en Talgol too had fled, her darling boy.
A flaming brand from off the glowing hearth
The greasy heroine snatch'd; o'er her pale foes
The threatening meteor shone, brandish'd in air,
Or round their heads in ruddy circles play'd.
Across the prostrate Hildebrand she strode,
Dreadfully bright: the multitude appall'd
Fled different ways, their beards, their hair in flames.
Imprudent she pursued, till on the brink

Of the next pool, with force united press'd,
And waving round with huge two-handed sway
Her blazing arms, into the muddy lake
The bold virago fell. Dire was the fray
Between the warring elements; of old
Thus Mulciber and Xanthus, Dardan stream,
In hideous battle join'd. Just sinking now
Into the boiling deep, with suppliant hands
She begg'd for life; black ooze and filth obscene
Hung in her matted hair; the shouting crowd
Insult her woes, and, proud of their success,
The dripping Amazon in triumph lead.
Now, like a gathering storm, the rallied troops
Blacken'd the plain. Young Talgol from their front,
With a fond lover's haste, swift as the hind
That, by the huntsman's voice alarm'd, had fled,
Panting returns, and seeks the gloomy brake,
Where her dear fawn lay hid, into the booth
Impatient rush'd. But when the fatal tale
He heard, the dearest treasure of his soul

Purloin'd, his Cindy lost; stiffen'd and pale
Awhile he stood, his kindling ire at length
Burst forth implacable, and injured love
Shot lightning from his eyes: a spit he seized,
Just reeking from the fat sirloin, a long,
Unwieldy spear; then with impetuous rage
Press'd forward on the embattled host, that shrunk
At his approach. The rich Avaro first,
His fleshy rump bored with dishonest wounds,
Fled bellowing; nor could his num'rous flocks,
Nor all the aspiring pyramids, that grace
His yard well-stored, save the penurious clown.
Here Cubbin fell, and there young Collakin,
Nor his fond mother's prayers, nor ardent vows
Of love-sick maids, could move relentless Fate.
Where'er he raged, with his far-beaming lance
He thinn'd their ranks, and all their battle swerved
With many an inroad gored. Then cast around
His furious eyes, if haply he might find
The captive fair; her in the dust he spied

Groveling, disconsolate; those locks, that erst
So bright, shone like the polish'd jet, defiled
With mire impure; thither, with eager haste,
He ran, he flew. But when the wretched maid
Prostrate he view'd, deform'd with gaping wounds,
And weltering in her blood, his trembling hand
Soon dropp'd the dreaded lance; on her pale cheeks
Ghastly he gazed, nor felt the pealing storm,
That on his bare defenceless brow fell thick
From every arm: o'erpower'd at last, down sunk
His drooping head, on her cold breast reclined.
Hail, faithful pair! if aught my verse avail,
Nor envy's spite, nor time shall e'er efface
The records of your fame: blind British bards,
In ages yet to come, on festal days
Shall chant this mournful tale, while listening nymphs
Lament around, and every generous heart
With active valour glows, and virtuous love.
How blind is popular fury! how perverse,
When broils, intestine rage, and force controls

Reason and law! As the torn vessel sinks
Between the burst of adverse waves o'erwhelm'd;
So fares it with the neutral head, between
Contending parties bruised, incessant peal'd
With random strokes that undiscerning fall:
Guiltless he suffers most, who least offends.
Mundungo, from the bloody field retired,
Close in a corner plied the peaceful bowl;
Incurious he and thoughtless of events,
Now deem'd himself conceal'd, wrapt in the cloud
That issued from his mouth, and the thick fogs
That hung upon his brows; but hostile rage
Inquisitive, found out the rusty swain.
His short black tube down his furr'd throat impell'd,
Staggering he reel'd, and with tenacious gripe
The bulky jordan, that before him stood,
Seized falling, that its liquid freight disgorged
Upon the prostrate clown; floundering he lay
Beneath the muddy beverage whelm'd, so late
His prime delight. Thus the luxurious wasp,

Voracious insect, by the fragrant dregs
Allured, and in the viscous nectar plunged,
His filmy pennons struggling flaps in vain,
Lost in a flood of sweets. Still o'er the plain
Fierce onset and tumultuous battle spread;
And now they fall, and now they rise, incensed
With animated rage, while nought around
Is heard, but clamour, shout and female cries,
And curses mix'd with groans. Discord on high
Shook her infernal scourge, and o'er their heads
Scream'd with malignant joy; when, lo! between
The warring hosts appear'd sage Rhadamanth,
A knight of high renown. Nor Quixote bold,
Nor Amadis of Gaul, nor Hudibras,
Mirrour of knighthood, e'er could vie with thee.
Great sultan of the vale! thy front severe,
As humble Indians to their pagods bow,
The clowns submiss approach. Themis to thee
Commits her golden balance, where she weighs
The abandon'd orphan's sighs, the widow's tears;

By thee give sure redress, comforts the heart
Oppress'd with woe and rears the suppliant knee.
Each bold offender hides his guilty head,
Astonish'd, when thy delegated arm
Draws her vindictive sword; at thy command,
Stern minister of power supreme! each ward
Sends forth her brawny myrmidons, their clubs
Blazon'd with royal arms; dispatchful haste
Sits earnest on each brow, and publick care.
Encompass'd round with these his dreadful guards,
He spurr'd his sober steed, grizzled with age
And venerably dull; his stirrups stretch'd
Beneath the knightly load; one hand he fix'd
Upon his saddle-bow, the other palm
Before him spread, like some grave orator
In Athens, or free Rome, when eloquence
Subdued mankind, and all the listening crowd
Hung by their ears on his persuasive tongue.
He thus the jarring multitude address'd.

“ Neighbours, and friends, and countrymen, the flower
Of Kiftsgate! ah! what means this impious broil?
Is then the haughty Gaul no more your care?
Are Landen's plains so soon forgot, that thus
Ye spill that blood inglorious, waste that strength,
Which, well employ'd, once more might have compell'd
The stripling Anjou to a shameful flight?
Or, by your great forefathers taught, have fix'd
The British standard on Lutetian tow'rs?
O sight odious, detestable! O times
Degenerate, of ancient honour void!
This fact so foul, so riotous, insults
All law, all sovereign pow'r, and calls aloud
For vengeance; but, my friends! too well ye know,
How slow this arm to punish, and how bleeds
This heart, when forced on rigorous extremes.
O, countrymen! all, all can testify
My vigilance, my care for publick good.
I am the man, who by your own free choice
Select from all the tribes, in senates ruled

Each warm debate, and emptied all my stores
Of ancient science in my country's cause.
Wise Tacitus, of penetration deep,
Each secret spring reveal'd; Thuanus bold
Breathed liberty, and all the mighty dead,
Raised at my call, the British rights confirm'd;
While Musgrave, How, and Seymour, sneer'd in vain.
I am the man, who from the bench exalt
This voice, still grateful to your ears, this voice
Which breathes for you alone. Where is the wretch
Distress'd, who in the cobwebs of the law
Entangled, and in subtle problems lost,
Seeks not to me for aid? In shoals they come,
Neglected, feeless clients, nor return
Unedified; scarce greater multitudes
At Delphi sought the god, to learn their fate
From his dark oracles. I am the man,
Whose watchful providence, beyond the date
Of this frail life extends, to future times
Beneficent; my useful schemes shall steer

The commonweal in ages yet to come.
Your children's children, taught by me, shall keep
Their rights inviolable; and as Rome
The Sibyls' sacred books, though wrote on leaves
And scatter'd o'er the ground, with pious awe
Collected; so your sons shall glean with care
My hallow'd fragments, every scrip divine
Consult intent, of more intrinsick worth
Than half a Vatican. Hear me, my friends!
Hear me, my countrymen! Oh suffer not
This hoary head, employ'd for you alone,
To sink with sorrow to the grave." He spake,
And vail'd his bonnet to the crowd. As when
The sovereign of the floods o'er the rough deep
His awful trident shakes, its fury falls,
The warring billows on each hand retire,
And foam and rage no more. All now is hush'd;
The multitude appeased, a cheerful dawn
Smiles on the fields, the waving throng subsides,
And the loud tempest sinks, becalm'd in peace.

Gorgonius now with haughty strides advanced,
A gauntlet seized, firm on his guard he stood,
A formidable foe, and dealt in air
His empty blows, a prelude to the fight.
Slaughter his trade, full many a pamper'd ox
Fell by his fatal hand; the bulky beast
Dragg'd by his horns, oft at one deadly blow,
His iron fist descending crush'd his skull,
And left him spurning on the bloody floor,
While at his feet the guiltless axe was laid.
In dubious fight of late one eye he lost,
Bored from its orb, and the next glancing stroke
Bruised sore the rising arch, and bent his nose:
Nathless he triumph'd on the well-fought stage,
Hockleian hero! nor was more deform'd
The Cyclops blind, nor of more monstrous size,
Nor his void orb more dreadful to behold,
Weeping the putrid gore, severe revenge
Of subtile Ithacus. Terribly gay
In his buff doublet, larded o'er with fat

Of slaughter'd brutes, the well-oil'd champion shone.
Sternly he gazed around, with many a frown
Fierce menacing, provoked the tardy foe.
For now each combatant, that erst so bold
Vaunted his manly deeds, in pensive mood
Hung down his head, and fix'd on earth his eyes,
Pale and dismay'd. On Hobbinol at last
Intent they gaze, in him alone their hope;
Each eye solicits him, each panting heart
Joins in the silent suit. Soon he perceived
Their secret wish, and eased their doubting minds.

“ Ye men of Kiftsgate! whose wide spreading fame
In ancient days was sung from shore to shore,
To British bards of old a copious theme;
Too well, alas! in your pale cheeks I view
Your dastard souls. O mean, degenerate race!
But since on me ye call, each suppliant eye
Invites my sovereign aid, lo! here I come,
The bulwark of your fame, though scarce my brows
Are dry from glorious toils just now achieved,

To vindicate your worth. Lo! here I swear,
By all my great forefathers' fair renown,
By that illustrious wicker, where they sate
In comely pride, and in triumphant sloth
Gave law to passive clowns; or on this spot,
In glory's prime, young Hobbinol expires,
And from his dearest Ganderetta's arms
Sinks to death's cold embrace; or by this hand
That stranger, big with insolence, shall fall
Prone on the ground, and do your honour right."

Forthwith the hilts he seized; but on his arm
Fond Ganderetta hung, and round his neck
Curl'd in a soft embrace. Honour and love
A doubtful contest waged, but from her soon
He sprung relentless, all her tears were vain,
Yet oft he turn'd, oft sigh'd, thus pleading mild:

" Ill should I merit these imperial robes,
Ensigns of majesty, by general voice
Conferr'd, should pain, or death itself avail
To shake the steady purpose of my soul.

Peace, fair one! Heaven will protect the man
By thee held dear, and crown thy generous love."

Her from the listed field the matrons sage
Reluctant drew, and with fair speeches soothed.

Now front to front the fearless champions meet:
Gorgonius, like a tower whose cloudy top
Invades the skies, stood lowering; far beneath
The stripping Hobbinol, with careful eye
Each opening scans, and each unguarded space
Measures intent. While negligently bold,
The bulky combatant, whose heart elate
Disdain'd his puny foe, now fondly deem'd
At one decisive stroke to win, unhurt,
An easy victory; down came at once
The ponderous plant, with fell malicious rage,
Aim'd at his head direct; but the tough hilts,
Swift interposed, elude his effort vain.
The cautious Hobbinol, with ready feet
Now shifts his ground, retreating; then again
Advances bold, and his unguarded shins

Batters secure; each well-directed blow
Bites to the quick; thick as the falling hail,
The strokes redoubled peal his hollow sides.
The multitude amazed with horror view
The rattling storm, shrink back at every blow,
And seem to feel his wounds; inly he groan'd,
And gnash'd his teeth, and from his blood-shot eye
Red lightning flash'd; the fierce tumultuous rage
Shook all his mighty fabrick; once again
Erect he stands, collected, and resolved
To conquer or to die. Swift as the bolt
Of angry Jove, the weighty plant descends;
But wary Hobbinol, whose watchful eye
Perceived his kind intent, slipp'd on one side
Declining; the vain stroke from such an height,
With such a force impell'd, headlong drew down
The unwieldy champion: on the solid ground
He fell rebounding, breathless and astunn'd
His trunk extended lay: sore maim'd, from out
His heaving breast he belch'd a crimson flood.

Full leisurely he rose, but conscious shame
Of honour lost his failing strength renew'd.
Rage and revenge and ever-during hate
Blacken'd his stormy front; rash, furious, blind,
And lavish of his blood, of random strokes
He laid on load; without design or art
Onward he press'd outrageous, while his foe
Encircling wheels, or inch by inch retires,
Wise niggard of his strength. Yet all thy care,
O Hobbinol! avail'd not to prevent
One hapless blow; o'er his strong guard the plant
Lapp'd pliant, and its knotty point impress'd
His nervous chine; he wreathed him to and fro
Convolved, yet thus distress'd, intrepid bore
His hilts aloft, and guarded well his head.
So when the unwary clown with hasty step
Crushes the folded snake, her wounded parts
Groveling she trails along, but her high crest
Erect she bears in all its speckled pride,
She swells inflamed, and with her forky tongue

Threatens destruction. With like eager haste,
The impatient Hobbinol, whose excessive pain
Stung to his heart, a speedy vengeance vow'd,
Nor wanted long the means; a feint he made
With well-dissembled guile, his batter'd shins
Mark'd with his eyes, and menaced with his plant.
Gorgonius, whose long-suffering legs scarce bore
His cumbrous bulk, to his supporters frail
Indulgent, soon the friendly hilts opposed;
Betray'd, deceived, on his unguarded crest
The stroke delusive fell; a dismal groan
Burst from his hollow chest, his trembling hands
Forsook the hilts, across the spacious ring
Backward he reel'd, the crowd affrighted fly
To escape the falling ruin. But, alas!
'Twas thy hard fate, Twangdillo! to receive
His ponderous trunk; on thee, on helpless thee,
Headlong and heavy the foul monster fell.
Beneath a mountain's weight, the unhappy bard
Lay prostrate, nor was more renown'd thy song,

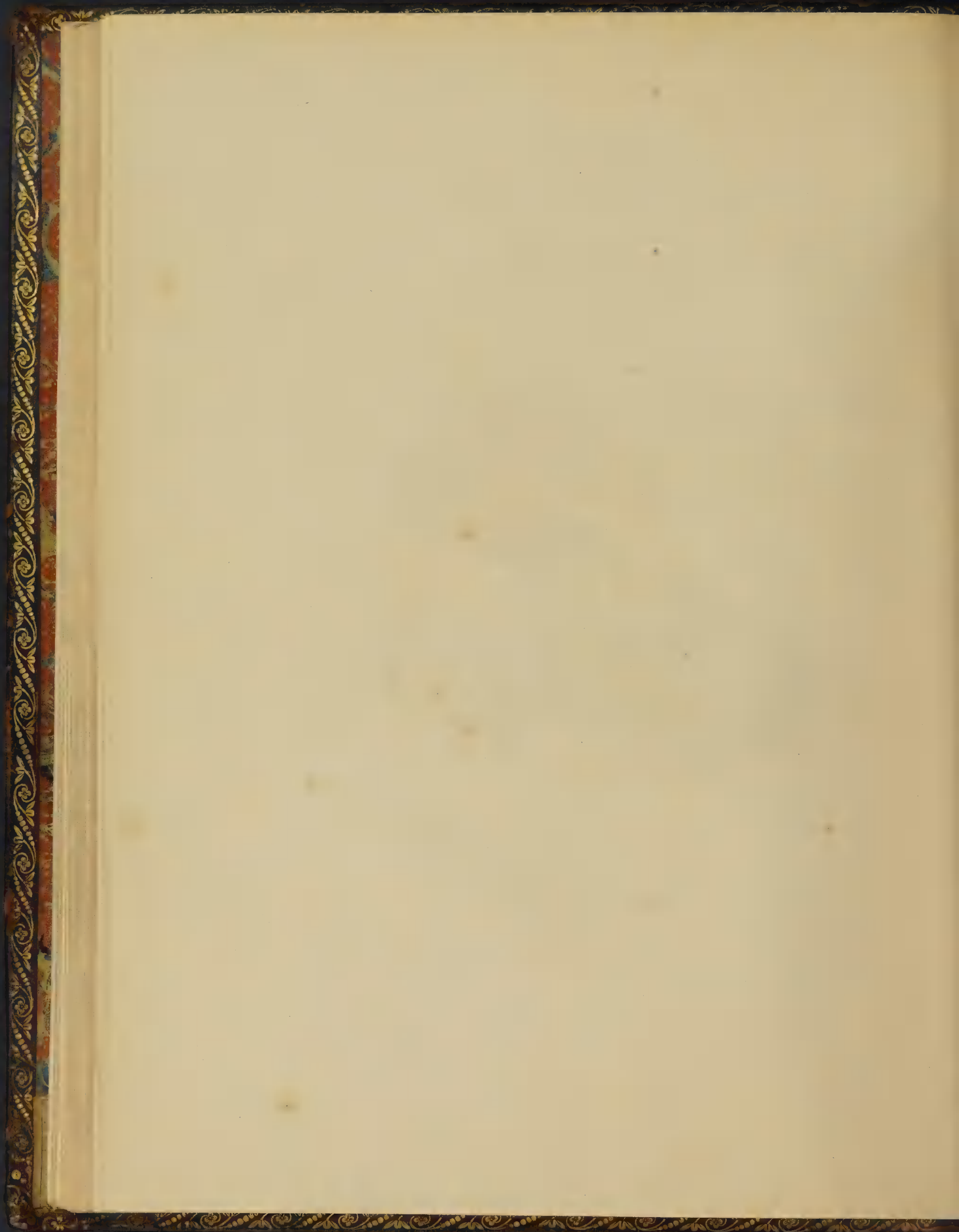
O seer of Thrace! nor more severe thy fate.
His vocal shell, the solace and support
Of wretched age, gave one melodious scream,
And in a thousand fragments strew'd the plain.
The nymphs, sure friends to his harmonious mirth,
Fly to his aid, his hairy breast expose
To each refreshing gale, and with soft hands
His temples chafe; at their persuasive touch
His fleeting soul returns; upon his rump
He sate disconsolate; but when, alas!
He view'd the shatter'd fragments, down again
He sunk expiring; by their friendly care
Once more revived, he thrice essay'd to speak,
And thrice the rising sobs his voice subdued;
Till thus at last his wretched plight he mourn'd:—

“ Sweet instrument of mirth! sole comfort left
To my declining years! whose sprightly notes
Restored my vigour and renew'd my bloom,
Soft healing balm to every wounded heart!
Despairing, dying swains, from the cold ground

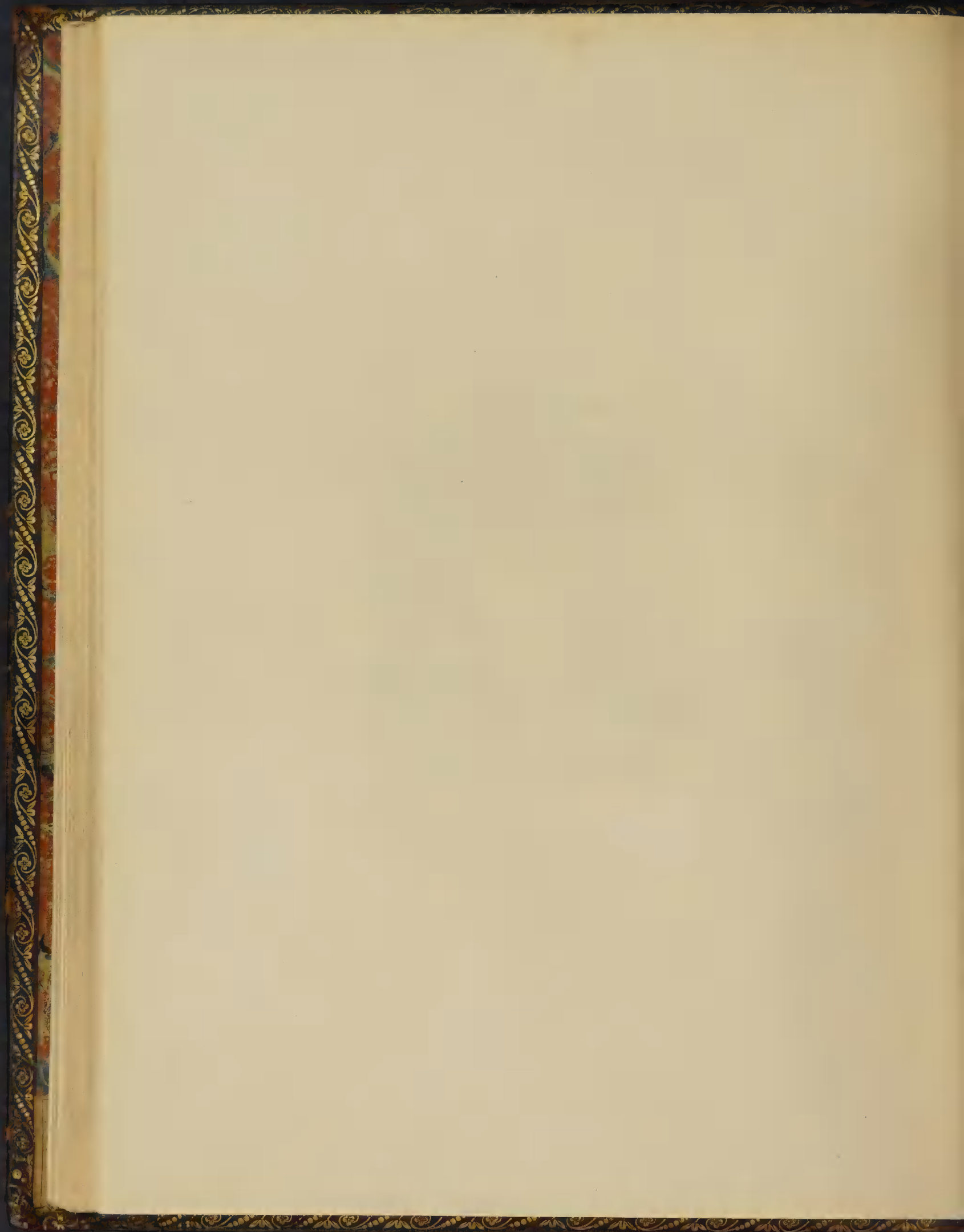
Upraised by thee, at thy melodious call,
With ravish'd ears received the flowing joy.
Gay pleantry, and care-beguiling joke,
Thy sure attendants were, and at thy voice
All nature smiled. But, oh! this hand no more
Shall touch thy wanton strings, no more with lays
Alternate from oblivion dark redeem
The mighty dead, and vindicate their fame.
Vain are thy toils, O Hobbinol! and all
Thy triumphs vain. Who shall record, brave man!
Thy bold exploits? Who shall thy grandeur tell,
Supreme of Kiftsgate? See thy faithful bard,
Despoil'd, undone. O cover me, ye hills!
Whose vocal clifts were taught my joyous song;
Or thou, fair nymph, Avona, on whose banks
The frolick crowd, led by my numerous strains,
Their orgies kept, and frisk'd it o'er the green,
Jocund and gay, while thy remurmuring streams
Danced by, well pleased. Oh! let thy friendly waves
O'erwhelm a wretch, and hide this head accursed."

So plains the restless Philomel her nest
And callow young, the tender growing hope
Of future harmony, and frail return
For all her cares, to barbarous churls a prey :
Darkling she sings, the woods repeat her moan.



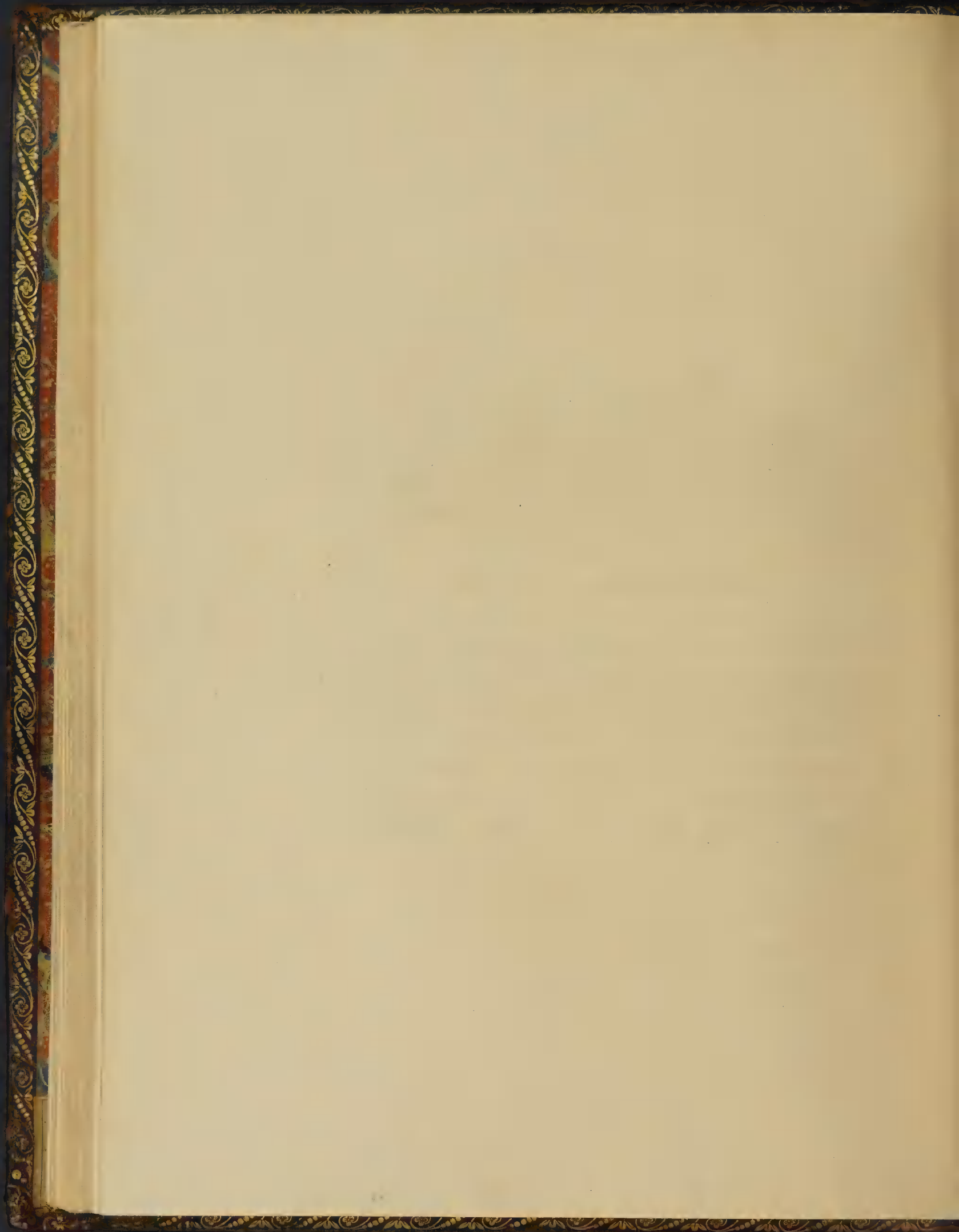






THE ARGUMENT.

Good eating expedient for heroes. Homer praised for keeping a table. Hobbinol triumphant. Ganderetta's bill of fare. Panegyric upon ale. Gossiping over a bottle. Compliment to Mr. John Philips. Ganderetta's perplexity discovered by Hobbinol; his consolatory speech, compares himself to Guy Earl of Warwick. Ganderetta encouraged, strips for the race; her amiable figure. Fusca the gipsy, her dirty figure. Tabitha, her great reputation for speed; hired to the dissenting academy at Tewksbury. A short account of Gamaliel the master, and his hopeful scholars. Tabitha carries weight. The smock-race. Tabitha's fall. Fusca's short triumph, her humiliation. Ganderetta's matchless speed. Hobbinol lays the prize at her feet. Their mutual triumph. The vicissitude of human affairs, experienced by Hobbinol. Mopsa, formerly his servant, with her two children appears to him. Mopsa's speech; assaults Ganderetta; her flight. Hobbinol's prodigious fright, is taken into custody by constables, and dragged to Sir Rhadamanth's.





Though some of old, and some of modern date,
Penurious, their victorious heroes fed
With barren praise alone, yet thou, my Muse!
Benevolent, with more indulgent eyes
Behold the immortal Hobbinol; reward
With due regalement his triumphant toils.
Let Quixote's hardy courage and renown
With Sancho's prudent care be meetly join'd.

O thou of bards supreme, Mæonides !
What well-fed heroes grace thy hallow'd page !
Laden with glorious spoils, and gay with blood
Of slaughter'd hosts, the victor chief returns.
Whole Troy before him fled, and men and gods
Opposed in vain. For the brave man, whose arm
Repell'd his country's wrong, even he, the great
Atrides, king of kings, even he prepares
With his own royal hand the sumptuous feast.
Full to the brim the brazen cauldrons smoke,
Through all the busy camp the rising blaze
Attests their joy ; heroes and kings forego
Their state and pride, and at his elbow wait
Obsequious. On a polish'd charger placed,
The bulky chine, with plenteous fat inlaid,
Of golden hue, magnificently shines.
The choicest morsels sever'd to the gods,
The hero next, well paid for all his wounds,
The rich repast divides with Jove ; from out
The sparkling bowl he draws the generous wine,

Unmix'd, unmeasured; with unstinted joy
His heart o'erflows. In like triumphant port
Sate the victorious Hobbinol; the crowd
Transported view and bless their glorious chief:
All Kiftsgate sounds his praise with joint acclaim.
Him every voice, him every knee confess'd,
In merit as in right their king. Upon
The flowery turf, earth's painted lap, are spread
The rural dainties; such as nature boon
Presents with lavish hand, or such as owe
To Ganderetta's care their grateful taste,
Delicious. For she long since prepared
To celebrate this day, and with good cheer
To grace his triumphs. Crystal gooseberries
Are piled on heaps; in vain the parent tree
Defends her luscious fruit with pointed spears.
The ruby-tinctured corinth clustering hangs,
And emulates the grape; green codlings float
In dulcet creams; nor wants the last year's store.
The hardy nut, in solid mail secure,

Impregnable to winter frosts, repays
Its hoarder's care. The custard's gelid flood
Impatient youth, with greedy joy, devours.
Cheesecakes and pies, in various forms upraised,
In well-built pyramids, aspiring stand.
Black hams, and tongues, that speechless can persuade
To ply the brisk carouse, and cheer the soul
With jovial draughts. Nor does the jolly god
Deny his precious gifts; here jocund swains,
In uncouth mirth delighted, sporting quaff
Their native beverage; in the brimming glass
The liquid amber smiles. Britons, no more
Dread your invading foes; let the false Gaul,
Of rule insatiate, potent to deceive,
And great by subtile wiles, from the adverse shore
Pour forth his numerous hosts; Iberia! join
Thy towering fleets, once more aloft display
Thy consecrated banners, fill thy sails
With prayers and vows, most formidably strong
In holy trumpery, let old Ocean groan

Beneath the proud Armada, vainly deem'd
Invincible; yet fruitless all their toils,
Vain every rash effort, while our fat glebe,
Of barley grain productive, still supplies
The flowing treasure, and with sums immense
Supports the throne; while this rich cordial warms
The farmer's courage, arms his stubborn soul
With native honour, and resistless rage.
Thus vaunt the crowd, each freeborn heart o'erflows
With Britain's glory, and his country's love.

Here, in a merry knot combined, the nymphs
Pour out mellifluous streams, the balmy spoils
Of the laborious bee. The modest maid
But coyly sips, and blushing drinks, abash'd:
Each lover, with observant eye beholds
Her graceful shame, and at her glowing cheeks
Rekindles all his fires; but matrons sage,
Better experienced, and instructed well
In midnight mysteries, and feast-rites old,
Grasp the capacious bowl; nor cease to draw

The spumy nectar. Healths of gay import
Fly merrily about: now Scandal sly
Insinuating gilds the specious tale
With treacherous praise, and with a double face
Ambiguous wantonness demurely sneers,
Till circling brimmers every veil withdraw,
And dauntless impudence appears unmask'd.
Others apart, in the cool shade retired,
Silurian cyder quaff, by that great bard
Ennobled, who first taught my groveling Muse
To mount aërial. O! could I but raise
My feeble voice to his exalted strains,
Or “ to the height of this great argument,”
The generous liquid in each line should bounce
Spiritous, nor oppressive cork subdue
Its foaming rage; but to the lofty theme
Unequal, Muse decline the pleasing task.

Thus they luxurious on the grassy turf
Revell'd at large; while nought around was heard
But mirth confused, and undistinguish'd joy,

And laughter far resounding; serious care
Found here no place, to Ganderetta's breast
Retiring; there with hopes and fears perplex'd
Her fluctuating mind. Hence the soft sigh
Escapes unheeded, spite of all her art;
The trembling blushes on her lovely cheeks
Alternate ebb and flow; from the full glass
She flies abstemious, shuns the untasted feast:
But careful Hobbinol, whose amorous eye
From her's ne'er wander'd, haunting still the place
Where his dear treasure lay, discover'd soon
Her secret woe, and bore a lover's part.
Compassion melts his soul, her glowing cheeks
He kiss'd, enamour'd, and her panting heart
He press'd to his; then, with these soothing words,
Tenderly smiling, her faint hopes revived.

“ Courage, my Fair! the splendid prize is thine;
Indulgent Fortune will not damp our joys,
Nor blast the glories of this happy day.
Hear me, ye swains! ye men of Kiftsgate! hear:

Though great the honours by your hands conferr'd,
These royal ornaments, though great the force
Of this puissant arm, as all must own,
Who saw this day the bold Gorgonius fall;
Yet were I more renown'd for feats of arms,
And knightly prowess, than that mighty Guy,
So famed in antique song, Warwick's great earl,
Who slew the giant Colbrand, in fierce fight
Maintain'd a summer's day, and freed this realm
From Danish vassalage; his ponderous sword
And massy spear attest the glorious deed;
Nor less his hospitable soul is seen
In that capacious cauldron, whose large freight
Might feast a province: yet were I like him
The nation's pride, like him I could forego
All earthly grandeur, wander through the world
A jocund pilgrim, in the lonesome den,
And rocky cave, with these my royal hands
Scoop the cold streams, with herbs and roots content,
Mean sustenance! could I by this but gain

For the dear Fair, the prize her heart desires.
Believe me, charming maid! I'd be a worm,
The meanest insect, and the lowest thing
The world despises, to enhance thy fame."
So cheer'd he his fair queen, and she was cheer'd.

Now with a noble confidence inspired,
Her looks assure success, now stripp'd of all
Her cumbrous vestments, beauty's vain disguise,
She shines unclouded in her native charms.
Her plaited hair behind her in a brede
Hung careless, with becoming grace each blush
Varied her cheeks, than the gay rising dawn
More lovely, when the new-born light salutes
The joyful earth, impurpling half the skies.
Her heaving breast, through the thin cov'ring view'd,
Fix'd each beholder's eye; her taper thighs,
And lineaments exact, would mock the skill
Of Phidias; Nature alone can form
Such due proportion. To compare with her
Oread, or Dryad, or of Delia's train,

Fair virgin huntress, for the chase array'd
With painted quiver and unerring bow,
Were but to lessen her superior mien,
And goddess-like deport. The master's hand,
Rare artisan! with proper shades improves
His lively colouring; so here, to grace
Her brighter charms, next her upon the plain
Fusca the brown appears, with greedy eye
Views the rich prize, her tawny front erects
Audacious, and with her legs unclean,
Booted with grime, and with her freckled skin
Offends the crowd. She of the gipsy train
Had wander'd long, and the sun's scorching rays
Imbrown'd her visage grim; artful to view
The spreading palm, and with vile cant deceive
The love-sick maid, who barter all her store
For airy visions and fallacious hope.
Gorgonius, if the current fame say true,
Her comrade once, they many a merry prank
Together play'd, and many a mile had stroll'd,

For him fit mate. Next Tabitha the tall
Strode o'er the plain, with huge gigantick pace,
And overlook'd the crowd, known far and near
For matchless speed; she many a prize had won,
Pride of that neighbouring mart,¹ for mustard famed,
Sharp-biting grain, where amicably join
The sister floods, and with their liquid arms
Greeting embrace. Here Gamaliel sage,
Of Cameronian brood, with ruling rod
Trains up his babes of grace, instructed well
In all the gainful discipline of prayer;
To point the holy leer, by just degrees
To close the twinkling eye, to expand the palms,
To expose the whites, and with the sightless ball
To glare upon the crowd; to raise or sink
The docile voice, now murmuring soft and low
With inward accent calm, and then again
In foaming floods of rapturous eloquence
Let loose the storm, and thunder through the nose

¹ Tewksbury in the vale of Evesham, where the Avon runs into the Severn.

The threaten'd vengeance: every muse profane
Is banish'd hence, and Heliconian streams
Deserted, the famed Leman lake supplies
More plenteous draughts, of more divine import.
Hail, happy youths! on whom indulgent Heaven
Each grace divine bestows, nor yet denies
Carnal beatitudes, sweet privilege
Of saints elect! royal prerogative!
Here in domestick cares employ'd and bound
To annual servitude, frail Tabitha,
Her pristine vigour lost, now mourns in vain
Her sharpen'd visage, and the sickly qualms
That grieve her soul; a prey to love, while grace
Slept heedless by: yet her undaunted mind
Still meditates the prize, and still she hopes,
Beneath the unwieldy load, her wonted speed.
Others of meaner fame the stately Muse
Records not, on more lofty flights intent
She spurns the ground, and mounts her native skies.
Room for the master of the ring; ye swains!

Divide your crowded ranks. See! there on high
The glittering prize, on the tall standard borne,
Waving in air; before him march in files
The rural minstrelsy, the rattling drum
Of solemn sound, and the animating horn,
Each huntsman's joy; the tabour and the pipe,
Companion dear at feasts, whose cheerful notes
Give life and motion to the unwieldy clown.
Even age revives; and the pale puking maid
Feels ruddy health rekindling on her cheeks,
And with new vigour trips it o'er the plain.
Counting each careful step, he paces o'er
The allotted ground, and fixes at the goal
His standard, there himself majestick swells.
Stretch'd in a line, the panting rivals wait
The expected signal, with impatient eyes
Measure the space between, and in conceit
Already grasp the warm-contested prize.
Now all at once rush forward to the goal,
And step by step, and side by side, they ply

Their busy feet, and leave the crowd behind.
Quick heaves each breast, and quick they shoot along
Through the divided air, and bound it o'er the plain.
To this, to that, capricious Fortune deals
Short hopes, short fears, and momentary joy.
The breathless throng, with open throats pursue,
And broken accents shout imperfect praise.
Such noise confused is heard, such wild uproar,
When on the main the swelling surges rise,
Dash o'er the rocks, and, hurrying through the flood,
Drive on each other's backs, and crowd the strand.
Before the rest tall Tabitha was seen,
Stretching amain, and whirling o'er the field;
Swift as the shooting star that gilds the night
With rapid transient blaze, she runs, she flies;
Sudden she stops, nor longer can endure
The painful course, but drooping sinks away,
And, like that falling meteor, there she lies
A jelly cold on earth. Fusca with joy
Beheld her wretched plight; o'er the pale corse

Insulting bounds; hope gave her wings, and now
Exerting all her speed, step after step
At Ganderetta's elbow urged her way,
Her shoulder pressing, and with poisonous breath
Tainting her ivory neck. Long while had held
The sharp contest, had not propitious Heaven
With partial hands to such transcendant charms
Dispensed its favours. For as o'er the green
The careless gipsy, with incautious speed,
Push'd forward, and her rival Fair had reach'd
With equal pace, and only not o'erpass'd;
Haply she treads, where late the merry train,
In wasteful luxury and wanton joy,
Lavish had spilt the cider's frothy flood,
And mead with custard mix'd. Surprised, appall'd,
And in the treacherous puddle struggling long,
She slipp'd, she fell, upon her back supine
Extended lay; the laughing multitude
With noisy scorn approved her just disgrace.
As the sleek leveret skims before the pack,

So flies the nymph, and so the crowd pursue.
Borne on the wings of wind the dear one flies,
Swift as the various goddess, nor less bright
In beauty's prime; when through the yielding air
She darts along, and with refracted rays
Paints the gay clouds, celestial messenger,
Charged with the high behests of Heaven's great queen!
Her at the goal with open arms received
Fond Hobbinol; with active leap he seized
The costly prize, and laid it at her feet.
Then pausing stood, dumb with excess of joy,
Expressive silence! for each tender glance
Betray'd the raptures that his tongue conceal'd.
Less mute, the crowd in echoing shouts applaud
Her speed, her beauty, his obsequious love.

Upon a little eminence, whose top
O'erlook'd the plain, a steep, but short ascent,
Placed in a chair of state, with garlands crown'd,
And loaded with the fragrance of the spring,
Fair Ganderetta shone; like mother Eve

In her gay silvan lodge, delicious bower !
Where Nature's wanton hand, above the reach
Of rule, or art, had lavish'd all her store,
To deck the flowery roof; and at her side,
Imperial Hobbinol, with front sublime,
Great as a Roman consul just return'd
From cities sack'd and provinces laid waste,
In his paternal wicker sate enthroned ;
With eager eyes the crowd about them press,
Ambitious to behold the happy pair.
Each voice, each instrument, proclaims their joy
With loudest vehemence : such noise is heard,
Such a tumultuous din, when, at the call
Of Britain's sovereign, the rustick bands
O'erspread the fields; the subtile candidates
Dissembled homage pay, and court the fools
Whom they despise ; each proud majestick clown
Looks big, and shouts amain, mad with the taste
Of power supreme, frail empire of a day,
That with the setting sun extinct is lost.

Nor is thy grandeur, mighty Hobbinol!
Of longer date. Short is, alas! the reign
Of mortal pride: we play our parts awhile,
And strut upon the stage; the scene is changed,
And offers us a dungeon for a throne.
Wretched vicissitude! for after all
His tinsel dreams of empire and renown,
Fortune, capricious dame, withdraws at once
The goodly prospect, to his eyes presents
Her, whom his conscious soul abhorr'd and fear'd.
Lo! pushing through the crowd, a meagre form,
With hasty step and visage incomposed,
Wildly she stared; rage sparkled in her eyes,
And poverty sate shrinking on her cheeks.
Yet through the cloud that hung upon her brows
A faded lustre broke, that dimly shone
Shorn of its beams; the ruins of a face
Impair'd by time and shatter'd by misfortunes.
A froward babe hung at her flabby breast,
And tugg'd for life; but wept, with hideous moan,

His frustrate hopes and unavailing pains ;
Another o'er her bending shoulder peep'd,
Swaddled around with rags of various hue.
He kens his comrade-twin with envious eye,
As of his share defrauded ; then amain
He also screams, and to his brother's cries,
In doleful concert joins his loud laments.
O dire effect of lawless love ! O sting
Of pleasures past ! As when a full-freight ship,
Blest in a rich return of pearl, or gold,
Or fragrant spice, or silks of costly die,
Makes to the wish'd-for port with swelling sails,
And all her gaudy trim display'd ; o'erjoy'd
The master smiles ; but if from some small creek
A lurking corsair the rich quarry spies,
With all her sails bears down upon her prey,
And peals of thunder from her hollow sides
Check his triumphant course, aghast he stands,
Stiffen'd with fear, unable to resist
And impotent to fly ; all his fond hopes

Are dash'd at once; nought now, alas! remains
But the sad choice of slavery or death.
So fared it with the hapless Hobbinol,
In the full blaze of his triumphant joy
Surprised by her, whose dreadful face alone
Could shake his stedfast soul. In vain he turns,
And shifts his place averse; she haunts him still,
And glares upon him with her haggard eyes,
That fiercely spoke her wrongs. Words swell'd with sighs
At length burst forth, and thus she storms, enraged:

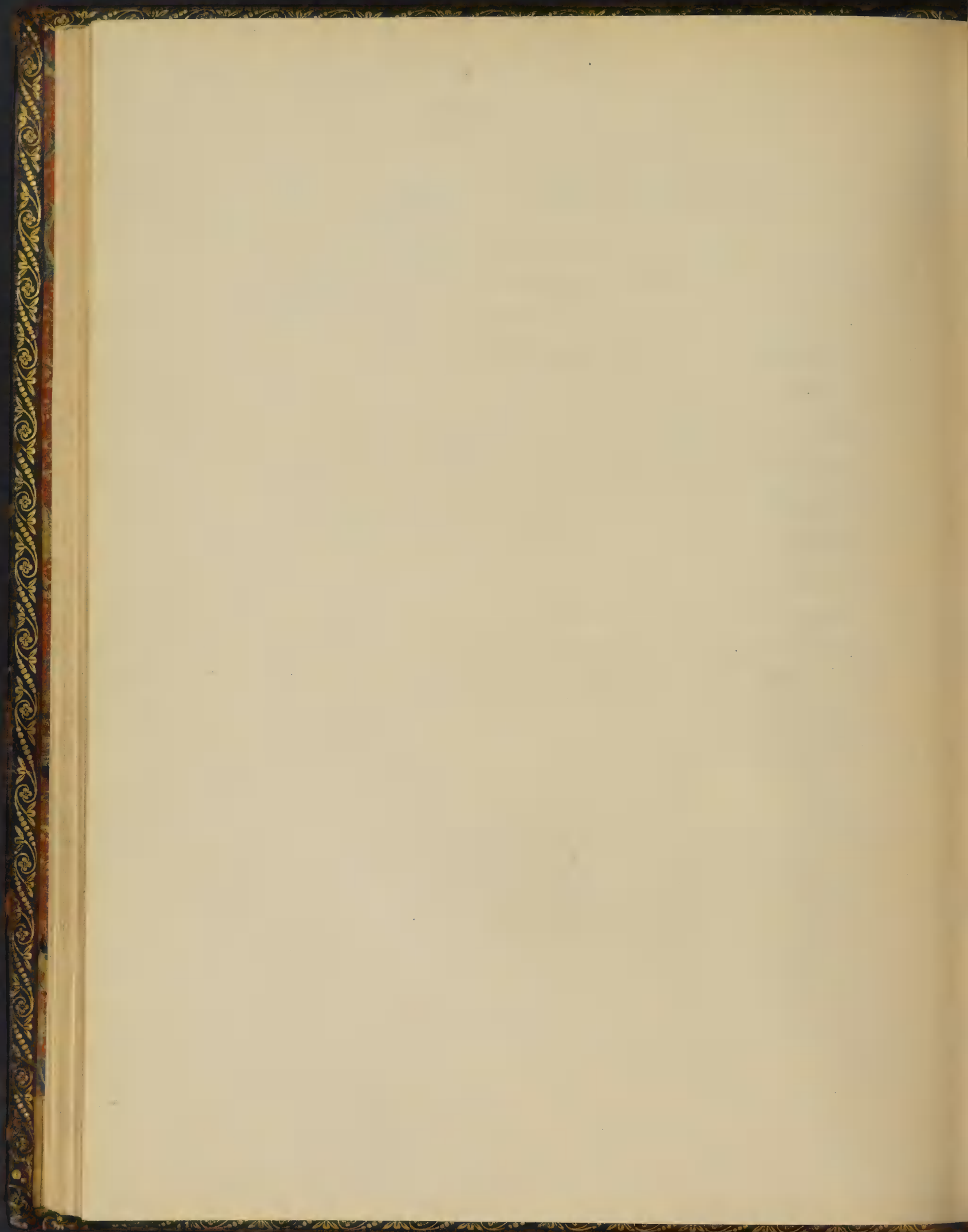
“ Know'st thou not me? false man! not to know me
Argues thyself unknowing of thyself,
Puff'd up with pride, and bloated with success.
Is injured Mopsa then so soon forgot?
Thou knew'st me once, ah! woe is me! thou didst.
But if laborious days, and sleepless nights,
If hunger, cold, contempt, and penury,
Inseparable guests, have thus disguised
Thy once beloved, thy handmaid dear; if thine
And Fortune's frowns have blasted all my charms;

If here no roses grow, no lilies bloom,
Nor rear their heads on this neglected face;
If through the world I range a slighted shade,
The ghost of what I was, forlorn, unknown;
At least know these. See! this sweet-simpering babe,
Dear image of thyself; see! how it sprunts
With joy at thy approach! see, how it gilds
Its soft smooth face, with false paternal smiles!
Native deceit, from thee, base man, derived!
Or view this other self, in every art
Of smiling fraud, in every treacherous leer,
The very Hobbinol! ah! cruel man!
Wicked, ingrate! And couldst thou then so soon,
So soon forget that pleasing fatal night,
When me, beneath the flowery thorn surprised,
Thy artful wiles betray'd? Was there a star,
By which thou didst not swear? Was there a curse,
A plague on earth, thou didst not then invoke
On that devoted head; if e'er thy heart
Proved haggard to my love, if e'er thy hand

Declined the nuptial bond? But, oh! too well,
Too well, alas! my throbbing breast perceived
The black impending storm; the conscious moon
Veil'd in a sable cloud her modest face,
And boding owls proclaim'd the dire event.
And yet I love thee.—Oh! couldst thou behold
That image dwelling in my heart! But why?
Why waste I here these unavailing tears?
On this thy minion, on this tawdry thing,
On this gay victim, thus with garlands crown'd,
All, all my vengeance fall! Ye lightnings blast
That face accursed, the source of all my woe!
Arm, arm, ye Furies! arm; all hell break loose!
While thus I lead you to my just revenge,
And thus"—Up starts the astonish'd Hobbinol
To save his better half:—"Fly, fly," he cries,
"Fly, my dear life, the fiend's malicious rage."
Borne on the wings of fear away she bounds,
And in the neighbouring village pants forlorn:—
So the coursed hare to the close covert flies,

Still trembling, though secure. Poor Hobbinol
More grievous ills attend; around him press
A multitude, with huge Herculean clubs,
Terrifick band! the royal mandate these
Insulting show: arrested, and amazed,
Half dead he stands; no friends dare interpose,
But bow dejected to the imperial scroll:
Such is the force of law. While conscious shame
Sits heavy on his brow, they view the wretch
To Rhadamanth's august tribunal dragg'd:
Good Rhadamanth! to every wanton clown
Severe, indulgent to himself alone.





FIELD SPORTS.

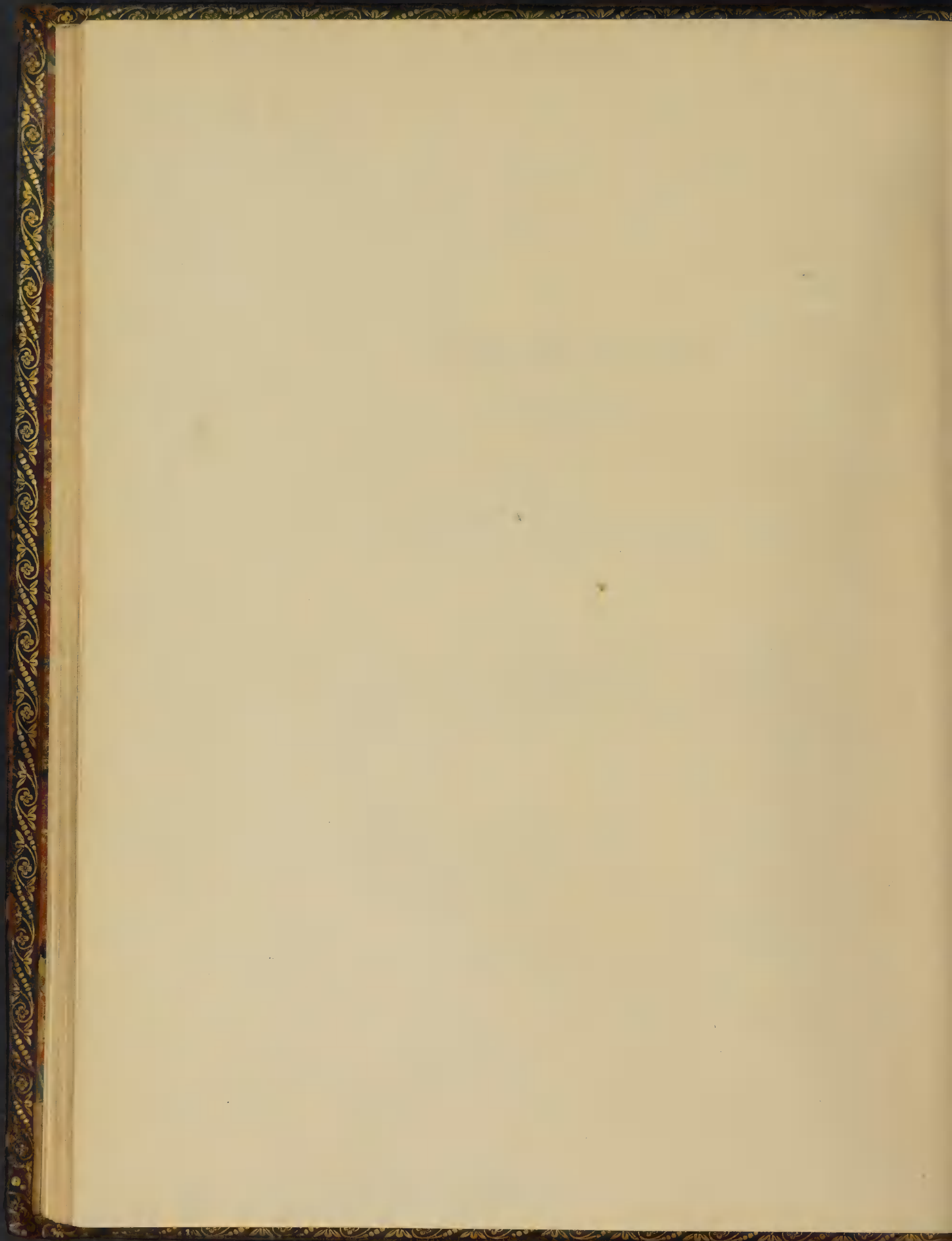
TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE.

Hæc incondita solus
Montibus, et sylvis, studio jactabat inani.

VIRG. Ecl. ii.

FIRST PRINTED IN 1742.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE several acts of parliament in favour of Falconry are an evident proof of that high esteem our ancestors had conceived for this noble diversion. Our neighbours, France, Germany, and Italy, and all the rest of Europe, have seemed to vie with one another who should pay the greatest honours to the courageous falcon. Princes and states were her protectors, and men of the greatest genius, and most accomplished in all sorts of literature, with pleasure carried the hawk on their fists: but the princes of Asia, Turks, Tartars, Persians, Indians, &c. have greatly outdone us Europeans in the splendour and magnificence of their field parades, both as huntsmen and falconers: for though the description of flying at the stag and other wild beasts, with eagles, may be thought a little incredible, yet permit me to assure the reader that it is no fiction, but a real fact. All the ancient books of falconry give us an account of it, and the relations of travellers confirm it: but what I think puts it out of all dispute, is the description the famous Monsieur de Thou has given us in his Latin poem, *De Re Accipitrarid*, reprinted at Venice, in 1735, with an Italian translation and notes.

Hoc studio Hæmonii circumsonat aula tyranni,
Tercentum illi equites, quoties venabula poscit,
Tot pedites adsunt: longo nemus omne remugit

ADVERTISEMENT.

Latrantum occursu, venatorumque repulsis
 Vocibus; huic gemini, neque enim satis esse ferendo
 Unus tanto oneri possit, cedente petauro
 Circum aquilam gestant, aliam totidem inde ministri
 Impositam subeunt: quarum minor illa volucris
 Ore canum voces fingit, nemora avia complens
 Terrore ingenti: latebris tum excita repente
 Infelix fera prorumpit: ruit altera demum
 Sublimis compar magno stridore per auras;
 Involat inque oculos et provolat atque capaces
 Expandens per inane sinus caligine densa,
 Horribilique supervolitans cœlum obruit umbra.
 Nec minor interea obsistit: sublimis ut illa,
 Hæc humilis sic terga volans premit et latus urget:
 Neve gradum referat retro, et vestigia vertat,
 Seu caprea aut cervus sese tulit obviis illis,
 Rostro atque ungue minax vetat, et cum compare vires
 Alternat socias, artemque remunerat arte.
 Nec mora, nec requies: furiis exterrita tantis
 Donec in insidias cœca convalle locatas
 Precipitet rabidis fera mox lanianda Molossis.

I am very much obliged to those gentlemen who have read with
 favour my poem upon Hunting: their goodness has encouraged
 me to make this short supplement to the Chase, and in this poem
 to give them some account of all the more polite entertainments
 of the field.



THE ARGUMENT.

Introduction. Description of flying at the stag with eagles, after the manner of the Asiatick princes. Description of hern hawking. Of flying at the river. Partridge hawking. Daring the lark with an hobby just mentioned. Shooting flying. Setting. Angling. Conclusion.

Once more, great Prince! permit an humble bard
Prostrate to pay his homage at your feet;
Then, like the morning lark from the low ground
Towering aloft, sublime, to soar and sing;
Sing the heart-cheering pleasure of the fields,
The choice delight of heroes and of kings.

In earlier times monarchs of Eastern race,
In their full blaze of pride, as story tells,
Train'd up the imperial eagle, sacred bird!
Hooded, with jingling bells she perch'd on high;
Not as when erst on golden wings she led
The Roman legions o'er the conquer'd globe,
Mankind her quarry; but a docile slave,
Tamed to the lure, and careful to attend
Her master's voice. Behold the man renown'd,
Abbas the Great, (whom all his fawning slaves
Deem'd king of kings, vain fools! they sure forgot
Greater Leonidas, and those fatal straits¹
Blood-stain'd, where slaughter'd Persians fell on heaps,
A dreadful carnage!) see his numerous hosts
Spread wide the plains, and in their front upborne
Each on her perch, that bends beneath her weight,
Two sister eagles, stately ponderous birds!
The air's a desert, and the feather'd race
Fly to the neighbouring covert's dark retreats.

¹ Straits of Thermopylæ. See The Story of Xerxes.

The royal pair on wing, this whirls around
In circles wide, or like the swallow skims
The russet plain, and mimicks as she flies
(By many a sleepless night instructed well)
The hound's loud openings, or the spaniel's quest.
What cannot wakeful industry subdue!
Meanwhile that mounts on high, and seems to view
A black ascending cloud, when pierced the gloom
Of vapours dank condensed, the sun's bright beams
Pain not her sight: she with expanded sails
Works through the ethereal fluid, then perhaps
Sees through a break of clouds this self-poised orb
Hard by her handmaid moon. She looks beneath
Contemptuous, and beholds from far this earth,
This molehill earth, and all its busy arts
Labouring for life, which lasts so short a day,
Just blazing and extinct. So thou, my soul!
That breath of life which all men must perceive,
But none distinctly know, when once escaped
From this poor helpless corse, and when on high

Borne on angelick wings, look down with scorn
On this mean, lessening world, and knaves grown rich
By chance, or fraud, or insolence of power.
Now from her highest pitch, by quick degrees,
With less ambition, nearer earth she tends,
As yet scarce visible, and high in air,
Poised on extended wings, with sharper ken
Attentive marks whate'er is done below.
Thus some wise general, from a rising ground,
Observes the embattled foe, where serried ranks
Forbid access, or where their order loose
Invites the attack, and points the way to fate.
All now is tumult; each heart swells with joy;
The falconers shout, and the wide concave rings:
Tremble the forests round; the joyous cries
Float through the vales; and rocks and woods and hills
Return the varied sounds. Forth bursts the stag,
Nor trusts the mazes of his deep recess;
Fear hid him close, strange inconsistent guide!
Now hurries him aghast, with busy feet,

Far o'er the spacious plain: he pants to reach
The mountain's brow, or with unsteady step
To climb the craggy cliff; the greyhounds strain
Behind to pinch his haunch, who scarce evades
Their gaping jaws. One eagle, wheeling, flies
In airy labyrinths, or with easier wing
Skims by his side, and stuns his patient ear
With hideous cries, then peals his forehead broad,
Or at his eyes her fatal malice aims:
The other, like the bolt of angry Heaven,
Darts down at once, and fixes on his back
Her griping talons, ploughing with her beak
His pamper'd chine: the blood and sweat distill'd,
From many a dripping furrow, stains the soil.
Who pities not this fury-hunted wretch,
Embarrass'd thus, on every side distress'd?
Death will relieve him; for the greyhounds fierce,
Seizing their prey, soon drag him to the ground;
Groaning he falls; with eyes that swim in tears
He looks on man, chief author of his woe,

And weeps, and dies! The grandees press around,
To dip their sabres in his boiling blood:
Unseemly joy! 'tis barbarous to insult
A fallen foe. The dogs, and birds of prey,
Insatiate, on his reeking bowels feast,
But the stern falconer claims the lion's share.

Such are the sports of kings; and better far
Than royal robbery, and the bloody jaws
Of all-devouring war! Each animal,
By natural instinct taught, spares his own kind;
But man, the tyrant man! revels at large,
Free-booter unrestrain'd, destroys at will
The whole creation, men and beasts his prey;
These for his pleasure, for his glory those.

Next will I sing the valiant falcon's fame,
Aërial fights, where no confederate brute
Joins in the bloody fray, but bird with bird
Justs in mid air. Lo! at his siege,² the hern,
Upon the bank of some small purling brook,

² The place where the hern takes his stand, watching his prey.

Observant stands to take his scaly prize,
Himself another's game; for mark, behind
The wily falconer creeps; his grazing horse
Conceals the treacherous foe, and on his fist
The unhooded falcon sits: with eager eyes
She meditates her prey, and, in her wild
Conceit, already plumes the dying bird.
Up springs the hern, redoubling every stroke,
Conscious of danger, stretches far away,
With busy pennons and projected beak,
Piercing the opponent clouds: the falcon swift
Follows at speed, mounts as he mounts, for hope
Gives vigour to her wings: another soon
Strains after to support the bold attack;
Perhaps a third. As in some winding creek
On proud Iberia's shore, the corsairs sly
Lurk waiting to surprise a British sail,
Full-freighted from Hetruria's friendly ports,
Or rich Byzantium; after her they scud,
Dashing the spumy waves with equal oars,

And spreading all their shrouds; she makes the main,
Inviting every gale, nor yet forgets
To clear her deck, and tell the insulting foe,
In peals of thunder, Britons cannot fear.
So flies the hern pursued, but fighting flies.
Warm grows the conflict; every nerve's employ'd:
Now through the yielding element they soar,
Aspiring high, then sink at once, and rove
In trackless mazes through the troubled sky.
No rest; no peace. The falcon hovering flies
Balanced in air, and confidently bold
Hangs o'er him like a cloud, then aims her blow
Full at his destined head. The watchful hern
Shoots from her like a blazing meteor swift
That gilds the night, eludes her talons keen
And pointed beak, and gains a length of way.
Observe the attentive crowd; all hearts are fix'd
On this important war, and pleasing hope
Glows in each breast. The vulgar and the great
Equally happy now, with freedom share

The common joy: the shepherd-boy forgets
His bleating care; the labouring hind lets fall
His grain unsown; in transport lost, he robs
The expecting furrow, and in wild amaze
The gazing village point their eyes to Heaven.
Where is the tongue can speak the falconer's cares,
'Twixt hopes and fears, as in a tempest toss'd?
His fluttering heart, his varying cheeks confess
His inward woe. Now, like a wearied stag,
That stands at bay, the horn provokes their rage;
Close by his languid wing, in downy plumes,
Covers his fatal beak, and cautious hides
The well-dissembled fraud. The falcon darts
Like lightning from above, and in her breast
Receives the latent death; down plumb she falls
Bounding from earth, and with her trickling gore
Defiles her gaudy plumage. See, alas!
The falconer in despair; his favourite bird
Dead at his feet, as of his dearest friend
He weeps her fate; he meditates revenge,

He storms, he foams, he gives a loose to rage;
Nor wants he long the means: the hern fatigued,
Borne down by numbers, yields, and prone on earth
He drops; his cruel foes, wheeling around,
Insult at will. The vengeful falconer flies,
Swift as an arrow shooting, to their aid,
Then muttering inward curses, breaks his wings,
And fixes in the ground his hated beak;³
Sees with malignant joy, the victors proud
Smear'd with his blood, and on his marrow feast.⁴

Unhappy bird! our fathers' prime delight!
Who fenced thine eyry round with sacred laws;⁵
Nor mighty princes now disdain to wear
Thy waving crest, the mark of high command,
With gold, and pearl, and brilliant gems adorn'd.⁶

³ This is done to prevent his hurting the hawk; they generally also break their legs.

⁴ The reward of the hawk, made of the brains, marrow, and blood, which they call in Italian *Soppa*.

⁵ No man was permitted to shoot within 600 yards of the eyry, or nest of an hern, under great penalties.

⁶ The hern's top worn at coronations here, and by the great men in Asia in their turbans.

Now, if the crystal stream delight thee more,
Sportsman! lead on, where through the reedy bank
The insinuating waters, filter'd, stray
In many a winding maze. The wild-duck there
Gluts on the fattening ooze, or steals the spawn
Of teeming shoals, her more delicious feast.
How do the sunbeams on the glassy plain
Sport wanton, and amuse our wandering eyes
With variously-reflected changing rays!
The murmuring stream salutes the flowery mead
That glows with fragrance; Nature all around
Consents to bless. What sluggard now would sink
In beds of down? What miser would not leave
His bags untold for this transporting scene?—
Falconer, take care, oppose thy well-train'd steed,
And slily stalk; unhood thy falcon bold,
Observe at feed the unsuspecting team
Paddling with oary feet; he's seen; they fly.
Now at full speed the falconer spurs away
To assist his favourite hawk; she from the rest

Has singled out the mallard young and gay,
Whose green and azure brightens in the sun.
Swift as the wind that sweeps the desert plain,
With feet, wings, beak, he cuts the liquid sky :
Behoves him now both oar and sail ; for see
The unequal foe gains on him as he flies.
Long holds the ærial course ; they rise, they fall,
Now skim in circling rings, then stretch away
With all their force, till at one fatal stroke
The vigorous hawk, exerting every nerve,
Truss'd in mid air bears down her captive prey.
'Tis well on earth they fall ; for oft the duck
Mistrusts her coward wings, and seeks again
The kind protecting flood : if haply then
The falcon rash aim a decisive blow,
And spring to gripe her floating prey, at once
She dives beneath, and near some osier's root
Pops up her head secure ; then views her foe
Just in the grasping of her fond desires,
And in full pride of triumph whelm'd beneath

The gliding stream. Ah! where are now, proud bird!
Thy stately trappings, and thy silver bells,
Thy glossy plumage, and thy silken crest?
Say, tyrant of the skies! wouldst thou not now
Exchange with thy but late desponding foe
Thy dreadful talons, and thy polish'd beak,
For her web-feet despised? How happy they
Who, when gay pleasure courts, and fortune smiles,
Fear the reverse, with caution tread those paths
Where roses grow, but wily vipers creep!

These are expensive joys, fit for the great,
Of large domains possess'd: enough for me
To boast the gentle spar-hawk on my fist,
Or fly the partridge from the bristly field,
Retrieve the covey with my busy train,
Or with my soaring hobby dare the lark.

But if the shady woods my cares employ
In quest of feather'd game, my spaniels beat
Puzzling the entangled copse, and from the brake
Push forth the whirring pheasant; high in air

He waves his varied plumes, stretching away
With hasty wing. Soon from the uplifted tube
The mimick thunder bursts, the leaden death
O'ertakes him, and with many a giddy whirl
To earth he falls, and at my feet expires.

When autumn smiles, all beauteous in decay,
And paints each chequer'd grove with various hues,
My setter ranges in the new-shorn fields,
His nose in air erect; from ridge to ridge
Panting he bounds, his quarter'd ground divides
In equal intervals, nor careless leaves
One inch untried. At length the tainted gales
His nostrils wide inhale; quick joy elates
His beating heart, which, awed by discipline
Severe, he dares not own, but cautious creeps
Low-cowering, step by step; at last attains
His proper distance; there he stops at once,
And points with his instructive nose upon
The trembling prey. On wings of wind upborne
The floating net unfolded flies, then drops,

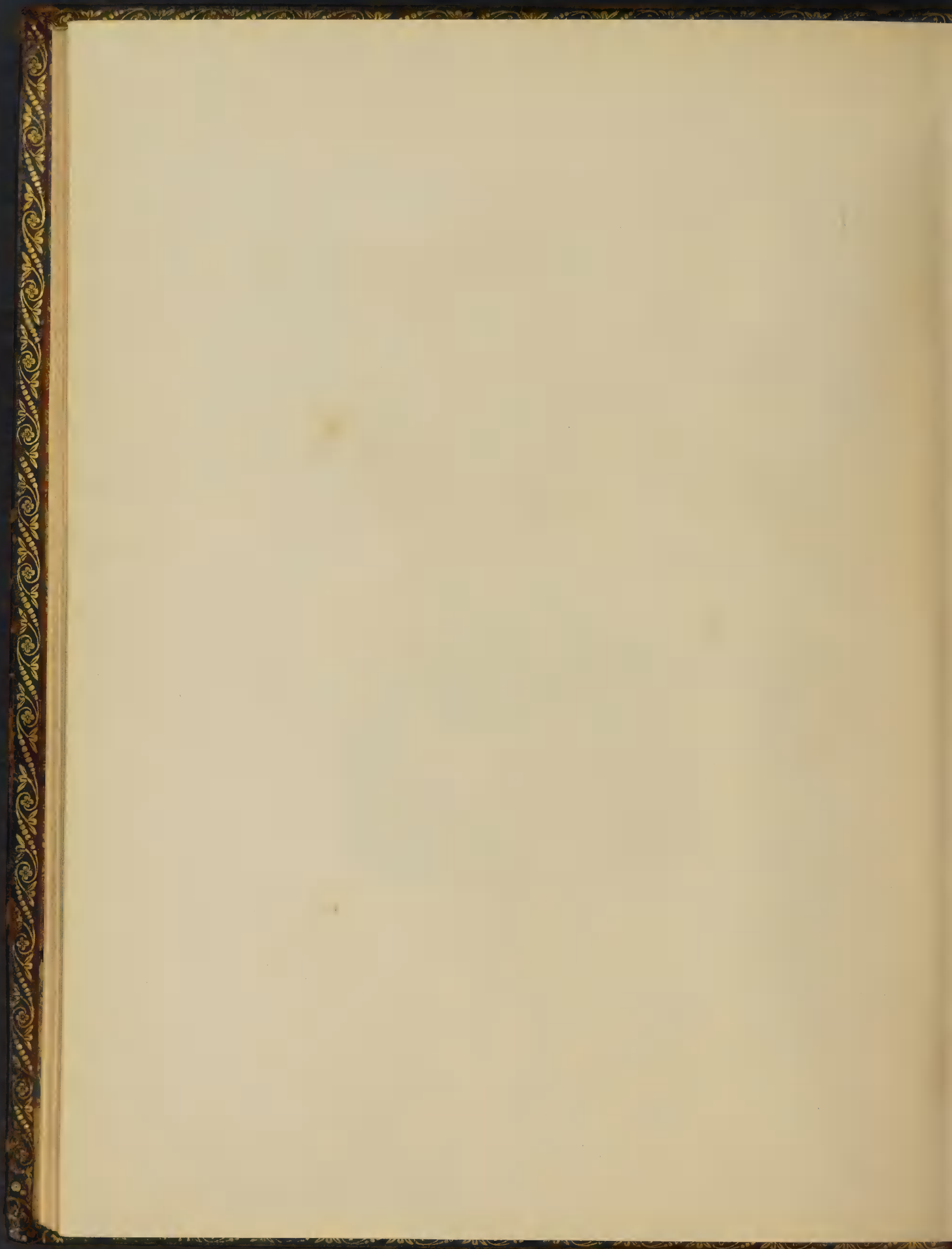
And the poor fluttering captives rise in vain.
Or haply on some river's cooling bank,
Patiently musing, all intent I stand
To hook the scaly glutton. See! down sinks
My cork, that faithful monitor; his weight
My taper angle bends; surprised, amazed,
He glitters in the sun, and struggling, pants
For liberty, till in the purer air
He breathes no more. Such are our pleasing cares
And sweet amusements; such each busy drudge
Envious must wish, and all the wise enjoy.

Thus, most illustrious Prince! have I presumed,
In my obscure sojourn, to sing at ease
Rural delights, the joy and sweet repast
Of every noble mind; and now, perchance,
Untimely sing, since from yon neighbouring shore
The grumbling thunder rolls, calm Peace alarm'd
Starts from her couch, and the rude din of war
Sounds harsh in every ear. But, righteous Heaven!
Britain deserted, friendless and alone,

Will not as yet despair: shine but in arms,
O Prince! beloved by all; patron profess'd
Of liberty! with every virtue crown'd!
Millions shall crowd her strand, and her white cliffs,
As Teneriffe or Atlas firm, defy
The break of seas, and malice of her foes,
Nor the proud Gaul prevail where Cæsar fail'd.



THE
BOWLING GREEN.





Where fair Sabrina's wandering currents flow,
A large smooth plain extends its verdant brow;
Here every morn, while fruitful vapours feed
The swelling blade, and bless the smoking mead,
A cruel tyrant reigns: like Time, the swain
Whets his unrighteous scythe, and shaves the plain:
Beneath each stroke the peeping flowers decay,
And all the unripen'd crop is swept away:
The heavy roller next he tugs along,
Whiffs his short pipe, or rears a rural song;

With curious eye then the press'd turf he views,
And every rising prominence subdues.

Now when each craving stomach was well stored,
And church and king had travell'd round the board,
Hither at Fortune's shrine to pay their court
With eager hopes the motley tribe resort;
Attornies spruce, in their plate-button'd frocks,
And rosy parsons, fat and orthodox :
Of every sect, whigs, papists, and highflyers,
Cornuted aldermen and hen-peck'd squires ;
Fox-hunters, quacks, scribblers in verse and prose,
And half-pay captains, and half-witted beaus ;
On the green cirque the ready racers stand,
Disposed in pairs, and tempt the bowler's hand ;
Each polish'd sphere does his round brother own,
The twins distinguish'd by their marks are known.
As the strong rein guides the well-managed horse,
Here weighty lead infused directs their course :
These in the ready road drive on with speed,
But those in crooked paths more artfully succeed,

So the tall ship that makes some dangerous bay,
With a side wind obliquely slopes her way.

Lo! there the silver tumbler fix'd on high,
The victor's prize inviting every eye!

The champions or consent or chance divide,
While each man thinks his own the surer side,
And the jack leads, the skilful bowler's guide.

Bendo stripp'd first: from foreign coasts he brought
A chaos of receipts, and anarchy of thought;
Where the tumultuous whims to faction prone,
Still justled monarch Reason from her throne:
More dangerous than the porcupine's his quill,
Inured to slaughter, and secure to kill.
Let loose, just Heaven! each virulent disease,
But save us from such murderers as these.
Might Bendo live but half a patriarch's age,
The unpeopled world would sink beneath his rage;
Nor need to appease the just Creator's ire
A second deluge or consuming fire.

He winks one eye, and knits his brow severe,
Then from his hand launches the flying sphere;
Out of the green the guiltless wood he hurl'd,
Swift as his patients from this nether world;
Then grinn'd malignant, but the jocund crowd
Deride his senseless rage, and shout aloud.

Next, Zadock, 'tis thy turn, imperious priest!
Still late at church, but early at a feast.
No turkey-cock appears with better grace,
His garments black, vermilion paints his face:
His wattles hang upon his stiffen'd band,
His platter feet upon the trigger stand,
He grasps the bowl in his rough brawny hand:
Then squatting down, with his grey goggle-eyes
He takes his aim, and at the mark it flies;
Zadock pursues, and wabbles o'er the plain,
But shakes his strutting paunch, and ambles on in vain;
For, oh! wide-erring to the left it glides,
The inmate lead the lighter wood misguides.
He, sharp reproofs with kind entreaties joins,

Then on the counter side with pain reclines,
As if he meant to regulate its course,
By power attractive and magnetick force;
Now almost in despair, he raves, he storms,
Writhes his unwieldy trunk in various forms.
Unhappy Proteus! still in vain he tries
A thousand shapes, the bowl erroneous flies,
Deaf to his prayers, regardless of his cries:
His puffing cheeks with rising rage inflame,
And all his sparkling rubies glow with shame.

Bendo's proud heart, proof against Fortune's frown,
Resolves once more to make the prize his own:
Cautious he plods, surveying all the green,
And measures with his eye the space between:
But as on him 'twas a peculiar curse
To fall from one extreme into a worse,
Conscious of too much vigour, now, for fear
He should exceed, at hand he checks the sphere.
Soon as he found its languid force decay,
And the too weak impression die away,

Quick after it he scuds, urges behind,
Step after step, and now, with anxious mind,
Hangs o'er the bowl, slow-creeping on the plain,
And chides its faint efforts, and bawls amain :
Then on the guiltless green the blame to lay,
Curses the mountains that obstruct his way ;
Brazen it out with an audacious face,
His insolence improving by disgrace.

Zadock, who now with three black mugs had cheer'd
His drooping heart, and his sunk spirits rear'd,
Advances to the trigg with solemn pace,
And ruddy hope sits blooming on his face.
The bowl he poised, with pain his hams he bends,
On well chose ground unto the mark it tends :
Each adverse heart pants with unusual fear,
With joy he follows the propitious sphere :
Alas ! how frail is every mortal scheme !
We build on sand, our happiness a dream !
Bendo's short bowl stops the proud victor's course,
Purloins his fame, and deadens all its force.

At Bendo, from each corner of his eyes,
He darts malignant rays, then muttering flies
Into the bower; there, panting and half dead,
In thick mundungus clouds he hides his head.

Muse! raise thy voice: to win the glorious prize,
Bid all the fury of the battle rise.
These but the light-arm'd champions of the field,
See Griper there! a veteran well skill'd:
This able pilot knows to steer a cause
Through all the rocks and shallows of the laws;
Or, if 'tis wreck'd, his trembling client saves
On the next plank, and disappoints the waves.
In this, at least, all histories agree,
That though he lost his cause he saved his fee.
When the fat client looks in jovial plight,
How complaisant the man! each point how right!
But if the abandon'd orphan puts his case,
And poverty sits shrinking on his face,
How like a cur he snarls! when at the door
For broken scraps he quarrels with the poor.

The farmer's oracle, when rent-day's near,
And landlords, by forbearance, are severe;
When huntsmen trespass, or his neighbour's swine,
Or tatter'd Crape extorts by right divine.
Him all the rich their contributions pay,
Him all the poor with aching hearts obey.
He in his swanskin doublet struts along,
Now begs, and now rebukes, the pressing throng,
A passage clear'd, he takes his aim with care,
And gently from his hand lets loose the sphere:
Smooth as a swallow o'er the plain it flies,
While he pursues its track with eager eyes;
Its hopeful course approved, he shouts aloud,
Claps both his hands, and justles through the crowd.
Hovering awhile, soon at the mark it stood,
Hung o'er inclined, and fondly kiss'd the wood;
Loud is the applause of every betting friend,
And peals of clamorous joy the concave rend.
But in each hostile face a dismal gloom
Appears, the sad presage of loss to come,

'Mong these Trebellius, with a mournful air
Of livid hue, just dying with despair,
Shuffles about, screws his chop-fallen face,
And no whipp'd gig so often shifts his place;
Then gives his sage advice with wondrous skill,
Which no man ever heeds, or ever will:
Yet he persists, instructing to confound,
And with his cane points out the dubious ground.

Strong Nimrod now, fresh as the rising dawn,
Appears; his sinewy limbs and solid brawn
The gazing crowd admires. He nor in courts
Delights, nor pompous balls, but rural sports
Are his soul's joy. At the horn's brisk alarms
He shakes the unwilling Phillis from his arms;
Mounts with the sun, begins his bold career,
To chase the wily fox or rambling deer.
So Hercules, by Juno's dread command,
From savage beasts and monsters freed the land.
Hark! from the covert of yon gloomy brake
Harmonious thunder rolls, the forests shake;

Men, boys, and dogs, impatient for the chase,
Tumultuous transports flush in every face;
With ears erect the courser paws the ground,
Hills, vales, and hollow rocks, with cheering cries resound:
Drive down the precipice (brave youths!) with speed,
Bound o'er the river banks, and smoke along the mead.
But whither would the devious Muse pursue
The pleasing theme, and my past joys renew?
Another labour now demands thy song.
Stretch'd in two ranks, behold the expecting throng
As Nimrod poised the sphere: his arms he drew
Back like an arrow in the Parthian yew,
Then launch'd the whirling globe, and full as swift it flew:
Bowls dash'd on bowls confounded all the plain;
Safe stood the foe, well cover'd by his train.
Assaulted tyrants thus their guard defends,
Escaping by the ruin of their friends.
But now he stands exposed, their order broke,
And seems to dread the next decisive stroke.
So at some bloody siege, the ponderous ball

Batters with ceaseless rage the crumbling wall,
(A breach once made) soon galls the naked town,
Riots in blood, and heaps on heaps are thrown.

Each avenue thus clear'd, with aching heart
Griper beheld, exerting all his art;
Once more resolves to check his furious foe,
Block up the passage, and elude the blow.
With cautious hand, and with less force, he threw
The well-poised sphere, that gently circling flew,
But stopping short, cover'd the mark from view.
So little Teucer on the well-fought field
Securely skulk'd behind his brother's shield.

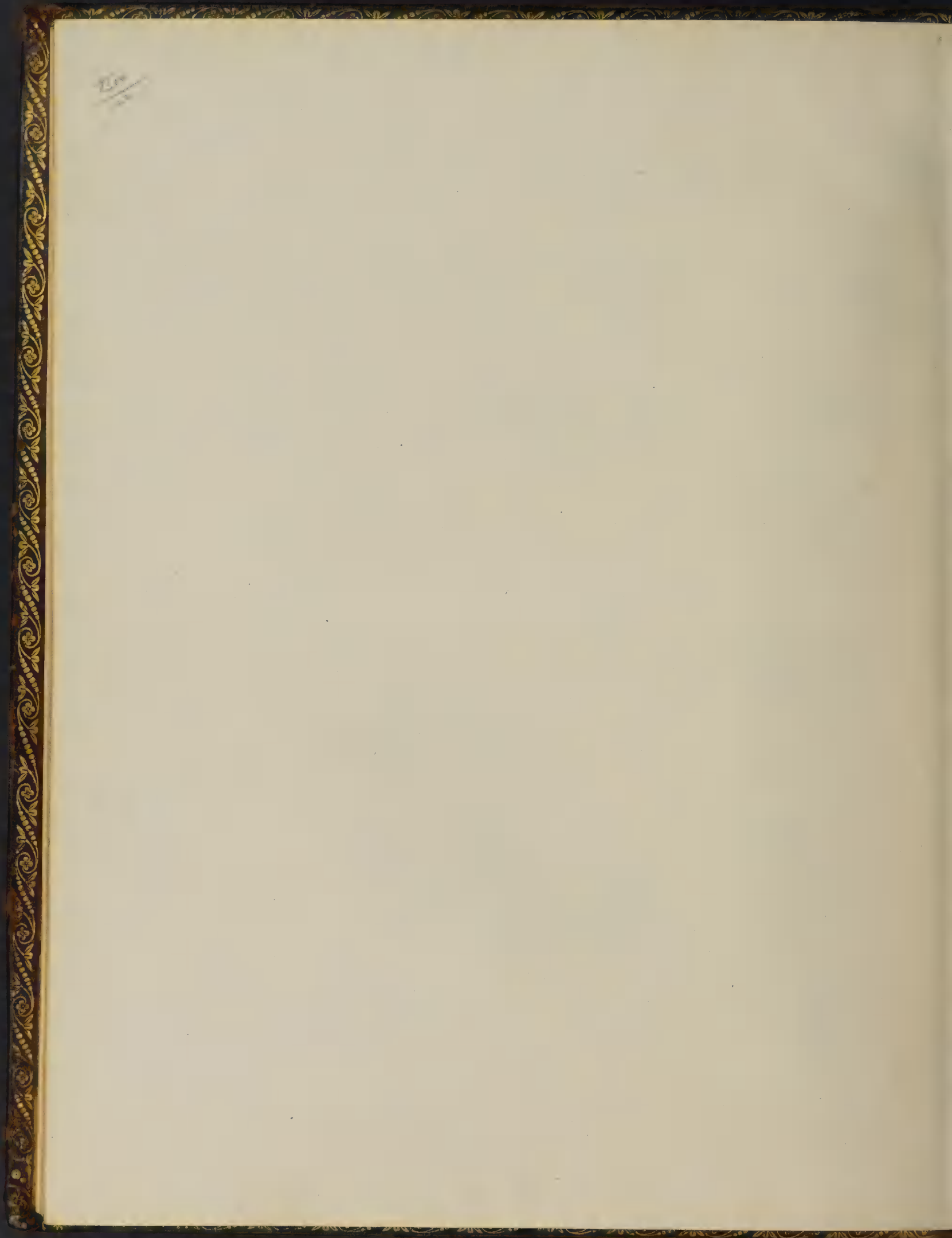
Nimrod, in dangers bold, whose heart elate
Nor courted Fortune's smiles nor fear'd her hate,
Perplex'd, but not discouraged, walk'd around,
With curious eye examined all the ground;
Not the least opening in the front was found.
Sideway he leans, declining to the right,
And marks his way, and moderates his might.
Smooth-gliding o'er the plain the obedient sphere

Held on its dubious road, while hope and fear
Alternate ebb'd and flow'd in every breast:
Now rolling nearer to the mark it press'd;
Then changed its course, by the strong bias rein'd,
And on the foe discharged the force that yet remain'd:—
Smart was the stroke, away the rival fled,
The bold intruder triumph'd in his stead.

Victorious Nimrod seized the glittering prize,
Shouts of outrageous joy invade the skies;
Hands, tongues, and caps, exalt the victor's fame;
Sabrina's banks return him loud acclaim.







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